

Knights of the Magical Light

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

STAR!
THE NEW
WORLD IN THE
MARVEL
UNIVERSE!

**SCREAM
OF THE
SKY CLAW!**



STAR!
THE NEW
WORLD IN THE
MARVEL
UNIVERSE!

**SCREAM
OF THE
SKY CLAW!**

THE BALANCE OF POWER

ONLY A FEW SHORT MOMENTS AGO THESE WARRIORS OF THE PLANET PRYSMOS STOOD WITHIN IRON MOUNTAIN, MYSTIC FORTRESS OF THE WIZARD KNOWN AS MERKLYN, WHOSE SORCERY IMBUED EACH OF THEM WITH AS-YET-UNKNOWN MAGICAL POWERS...

THEN, WITH A WORD FROM MERKLYN, THEY WERE INSTANTLY AND MYSTICALLY TRANSPORTED TO THE SHATTERED LAND AT THE MOUNTAIN'S BASE, WHERE THEY HEAR A PROPHECY FILLED BOTH WITH MENACE AND HOPE...

ONE FINAL WORD, BRAVE KNIGHTS! WITH THE POWERS YOU NOW POSSESS, YOU CAN EITHER REBUILD THIS WONDROUS WORLD--

--OR DESTROY IT ALL! THE FATE OF PRYSMOS IS IN YOUR HANDS!

JIM SALICRUP • PLOT
GERRY CONWAY • SCRIPT
MARK BAGLEY • PENCILS
ROMEO TANGHAL • INKS
JANICE CHIANG • LETTERS
JULIANNA FERRITER • COLORS
BOB SUDIANSKY • EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO • EDITOR IN CHIEF



HOLD IT, MERKLYN! YOU'VE GIVEN POWERS TO THE KNIGHTS AND LORDS WITH STAFFS-- WHAT ABOUT THOSE OF US WITHOUT STAFFS?

I HATE TO AGREE WITH REEKON, BUT HE'S RIGHT. WHAT POWERS WILL WE HAVE?



YOU WILL DISCOVER YOUR POWERS SOON ENOUGH, ALL OF YOU.

ONLY YOU CAN DECIDE WHETHER TO USE THOSE POWERS FOR GOOD OR ILL.



THE CHOICE IS YOURS...

MERKLYN'S IMAGE IS FADING AWAY!

MYSTIC POWERS-- MYSTIC STAFFS-- SEEMS FANTASTIC!



FANTASTIC OR NOT, WITTERQUICK--YOU'VE GOT A MYSTIC STAFF, AND I DON'T!

BUT WE'LL SOON FIX THAT!

UH-UH, REEKON--



--CAN'T LET YOU HAVE IT!

CALL ME *IMPULSIVE*, BUT I'VE A FEELING I'LL NEED MY STAFF TO HELP REBUILD THE WORLD!

MOVING SO FAST-- I CAN'T HOLD--



MY LORD DARKSTORM, WILL THANK ME FOR TAKING YOU APART, CRYOTEK--AND I PROBABLY WON'T EVEN WORK UP MUCH OF AN APPETITE!

NO WONDER YOU *EAT* SO MUCH, CINDARR!

YOU'VE GOT SUCH A BIG MOUTH.



BACK FOR MORE, EH, REEKON? GLAD TO ACCOMMODATE.

THE REST OF YOU--DON'T JUST STAND THERE!

LEORIC'S MEN ARE OUR ENEMIES!

IN THE NAME OF OUR LEADER, DARKSTORM-- CRUSH THEM! TAKE THEIR STAFFS!

WITH A WILD CRY, THE TWO GROUPS OF KNIGHTLY WARRIORS ATTACK, THROWING THEMSELVES MAN AGAINST MAN, IN A COMBAT MADE ALL THE MORE FEROCIOUS BY ITS SHEER SENSELESSNESS.

SUCH IS THE MADNESS THAT HAS CONSUMED THE ONCE-PEACEFUL PLANET OF PRYSMOS IN THE DAYS SINCE THE AGE OF SCIENCE ENDED, AND THE AGE OF MAGIC RETURNED...

LIKE THE TECHNOLOGY THAT NOW LIES IN SCATTERED RUINS ABOUT THIS WORLD, THE ANCIENT WAYS OF LAW AND PEACE HAVE COLLAPSED AS WELL.

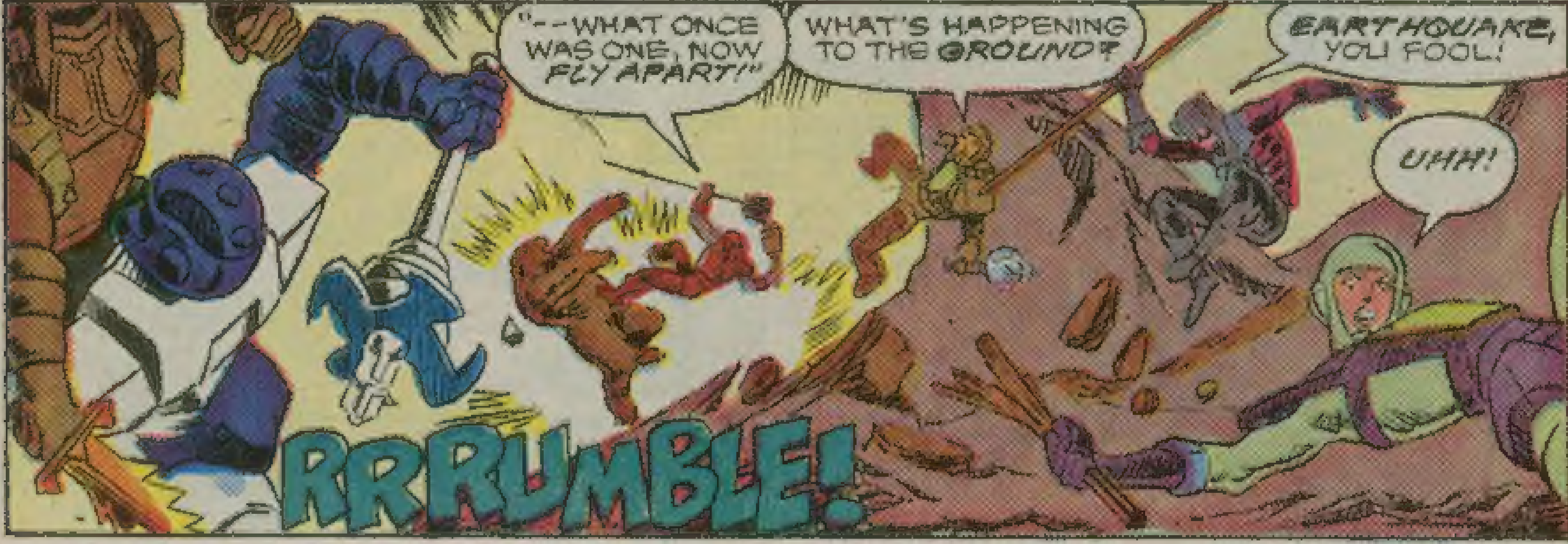
IN THIS SAVAGE NOW WORLD, IN THIS AGE OF MAGIC, THE RULES ARE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST AND MIGHT MAKES RIGHT.

WATCHING THIS SCENE, THE KNIGHT KNOWN AS LEORIC FEELS BITTERNESS WELLING IN HIS HEART.

WHAT GLORY THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN, COULD THESE KNIGHTS BUT WORK TOGETHER FOR A COMMON CAUSE...





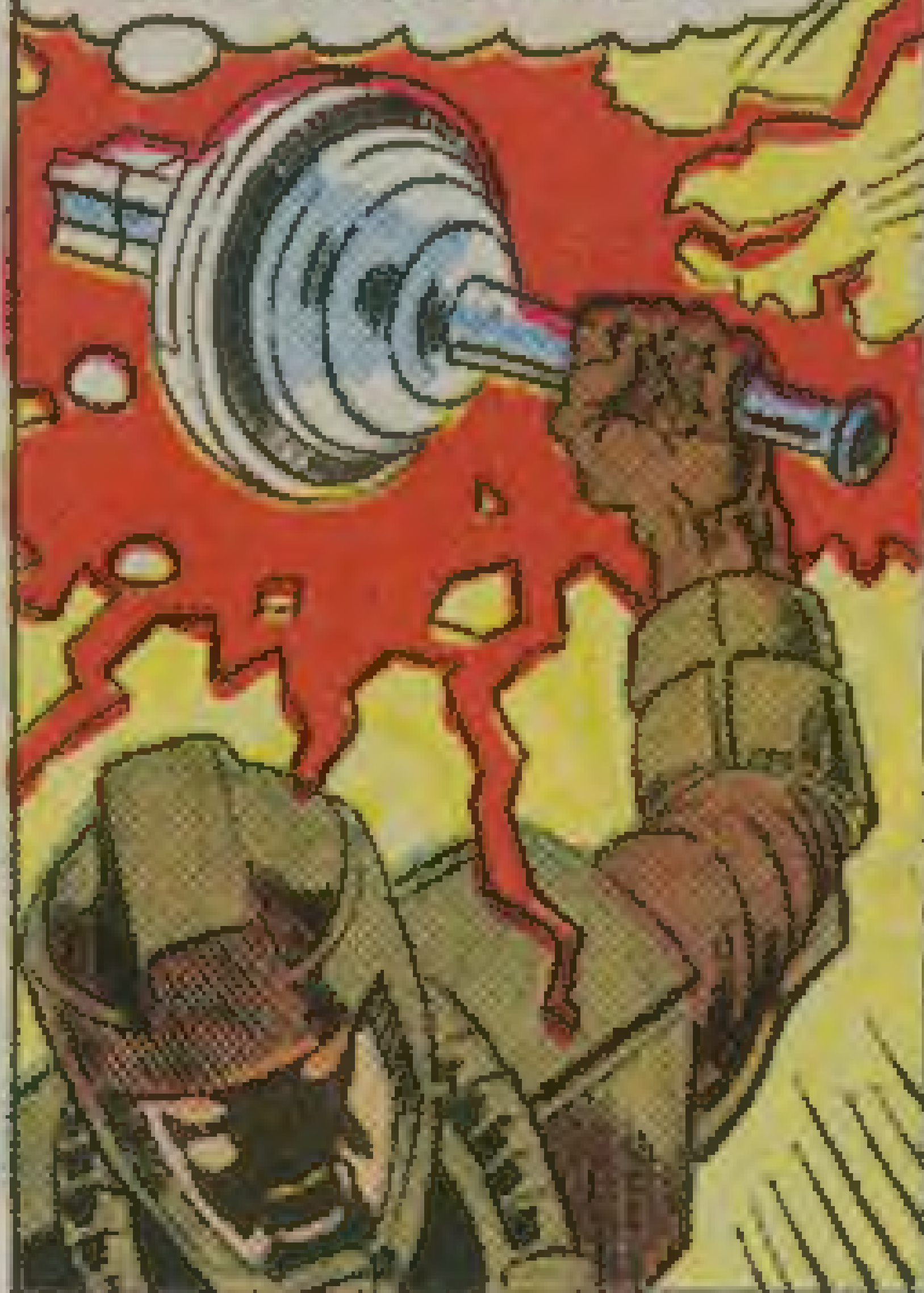


MAKING THE EARTH MOVE MUST BE CINDARR'S POWER!

UH-OH! I THOUGHT I SMELLED TROUBLE! REEKON CAUGHT ECTAR OFF GUARD DURING THE SHAKEUP! HE NEEDS HELP!



I MAY NOT HAVE A STAFF-- I MAY NOT KNOW WHAT MY POWER IS-- BUT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A FIGHTER--



--AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO STOP FIGHTING NOW!

WHAM!



YOU ALL RIGHT, OLD-TIMER?

I MAY HAVE A FEW YEARS ON YOU, FERYL, BUT I'M NOT OLD-- JUST EXPERIENCED.

I'D LIKE TO SHARE SOME OF THAT EXPERIENCE WITH REEKON HERE...

ANY TIME YOU'RE READY, ECTAR!



STOP YOUR FIGHTING, ALL OF YOU!

ARE YOU WARRIORS OR MADMEN? THINK OF THE POWER WE NOW POSSESS-- AND LOOK HOW YOU'RE USING IT!



FIGHTING AMONG OURSELVES-- LIKE CHILDREN IN A SCHOOLYARD!

WE HAVE A WORLD TO REBUILD! IS THIS ANY WAY TO BEGIN?

WHAT'S WRONG, LEORIC? AFRAID YOUR KNIGHTS MIGHT LOSE IF WE FOUGHT A BATTLE TO THE FINISH?

THAT'S NOT WHAT HE SAID, CRAVEX!

NOT EVERYONE WHO WANTS PEACE IS AFRAID!

MOST ARE.

OH, SHUT UP.



WHEN THE AGE OF SCIENCE ENDED, THE WORLD AS WE KNEW IT ENDED AS WELL. NOW WE LIVE IN AN AGE OF MAGIC, A TIME OF WONDER... THE DAWN OF A *NEW BEGINNING*.

WITH OUR POWERS, AS WE COME TO *UNDERSTAND* THEM, WE CAN BRING *HOPE* TO THE HOPELESS. WE CAN RESTORE *JUSTICE* TO THE LAND.

BUT FIRST WE MUST STOP FIGHTING AMONG OURSELVES.

I AGREE.

DARKSTORM...?

LET'S SAVE OUR STRENGTH FOR THE *COMING STRUGGLE* AND LEARN WHAT POWERS WE EACH POSSESS.

LET LEORIC PLAN PEACE IF IT MAKES HIM HAPPY.

I WILL PLAN FOR WAR.

REEKON, MORTDRED, CINDARR, CRAVEX AND LEXOR-- YOU'VE ALL SWORN ALLEGIANCE TO MY STAFF. WHO ELSE WILL JOIN THE *DARKLING LORDS*?

I'LL STAND WITH YOU, DARKSTORM. I'VE NO PATIENCE FOR *WEAKNESS*, AND LEORIC'S MEWLING PLEAS FOR PEACE MAKE MY STOMACH TURN.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT *POWER* I POSSESS, BUT WHEN I DO... I WANT TO USE IT TO *CRUSH*, NOT *CREATE*.

GLAD TO HAVE YOU, VIRULINA. ANY OTHERS?

NO?

VERY WELL, THEN, WHEN NEXT WE MEET, MAY IT BE ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE!

A VIOLENT, *ANGRY* MAN, THAT ONE.

HE'LL MAKE A MOST *DANGEROUS* ENEMY.

NOT LONG AFTER, AT LEORIC'S STRONGHOLD IN THE CITY OF NEW VALARAK, AMID THE RUINS OF A ONCE-MIGHTY TECHNOLOGY...

IT'S SO FRUSTRATING-- KNOWING YOU HAVE A POWER BUT NOT KNOWING WHAT IT IS. WITHOUT A STAFF, I FEEL ALMOST-- **HELPLESS**.

I UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS, GALADRIA...



...AND UNTIL WE COMPREHEND THE FULL NATURE OF THE MAGICAL POWERS MERKLYN GAVE US, I SUGGEST WE STAY HERE IN NEW VALARAK, TO STUDY AND TRAIN TOGETHER.

IN TIME, THOSE OF YOU WITHOUT STAFFS-- GALADRIA, FERYL AND ECTAR-- WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE YOUR MAGIC GIFTS REVEALED.

TIME IS SOMETHING WE HAVE IN **SHORT SUPPLY**, LEORIC.

WITTERQUICK'S RIGHT. WHY WAIT FOR DARKSTORM TO STRIKE?

I SAY WE SHOULD ATTACK **FIRST**, WITH OR WITHOUT POWERS.

BOY FERYL'S GOT A POINT. BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD OFFENSE.

MAGIC OR NO MAGIC, I WANT TO FACE **REEKON** AGAIN... ONE ON ONE.



DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY BY YOUR **ANGER**, ECTAR.

REMEMBER WHAT MERKLYN SAID-- WE'RE SUPPOSED TO USE OUR MAGIC TO **REBUILD** THE WORLD, NOT FIGHT A WAR.

MAYBE WE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT THE WAR **FIRST**, ARZON.

WHAT-EVER HAPPENS, I AGREE WITH LEORIC--WE MUST STAND TOGETHER!



THEN LET US TAKE AN OATH-- TO STAND AS ONE, TO STRIVE AS ONE, UNTIL OUR DESTINED WORK IS DONE!

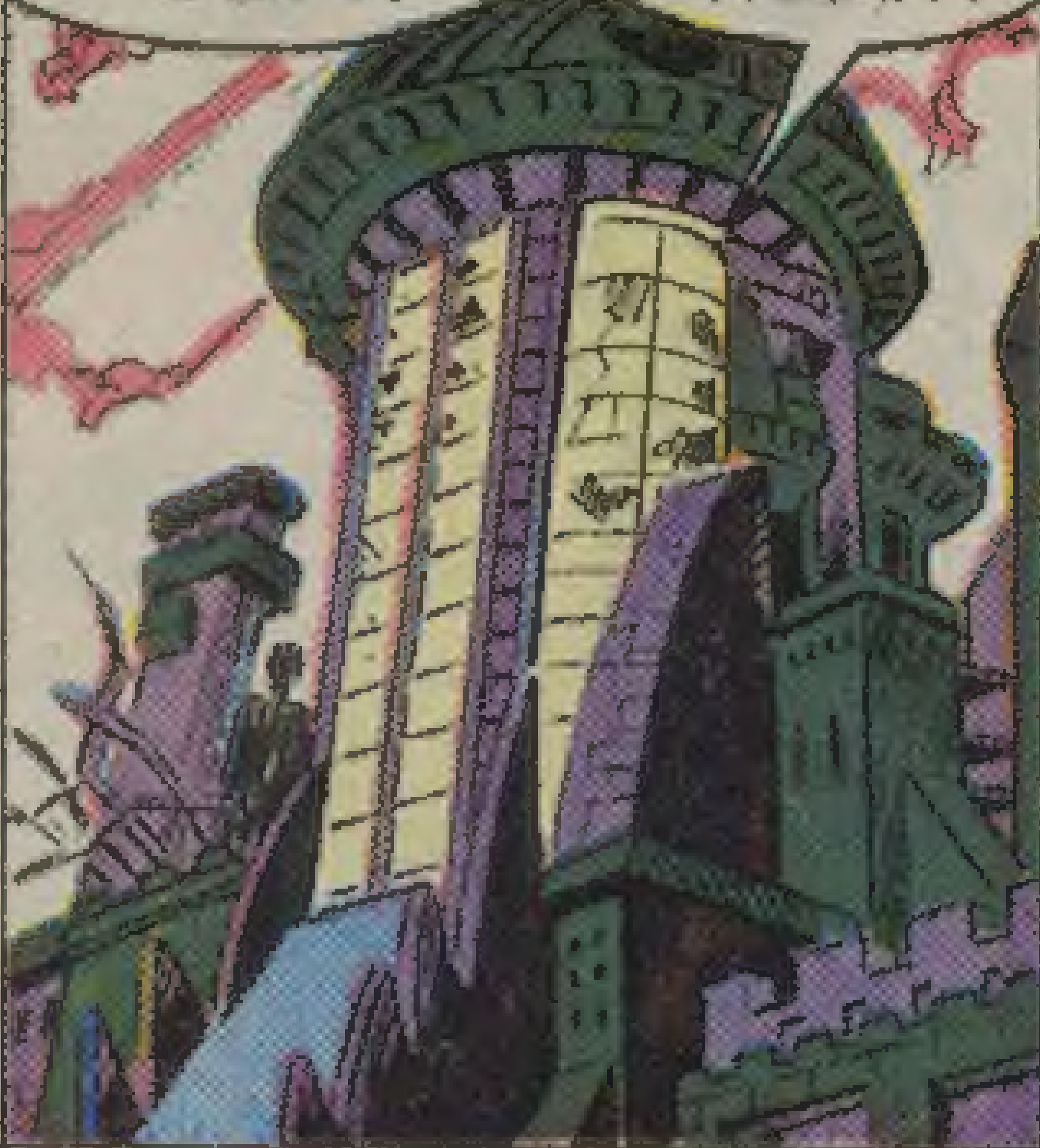
LET THOSE WHO AGREE SAY **AYE!**



ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY, IN THE DARK DOMAIN OF THE LORD KNOWN AS DARKSTORM...

I RESENT THE IMPLICATION THAT SOMEHOW THE THREE OF US ARE **LESS** THAN THE REST OF YOU-- JUST BECAUSE **YOU** HAVE STAFFS AND WE **DON'T**.

MORTDRED, MAY BE USELESS, BUT I'M A **SPY** OF THE FIRST ORDER WITH OR WITHOUT A STAFF!



EH? REEKON, HOW DARE YOU--

BE QUIET, MORTDRED, AND DON'T ARGUE. WE ALL KNOW YOU'RE A SPINELESS WORM.

REEKON SPEAKS FOR ME AS WELL. EVEN WITHOUT A STAFF, I'M MORE THAN A MATCH FOR ANY MAN!

THANK YOU, VIRULINA. NOW AS I WAS SAYING--



--OUR **FIRST** PRIORITY SHOULD BE FINDING STAFFS FOR VIRULINA, MORTDRED AND MYSELF.

SILENCE, REEKON.

I AM LEADER HERE.

I WILL DECIDE OUR PRIORITIES.

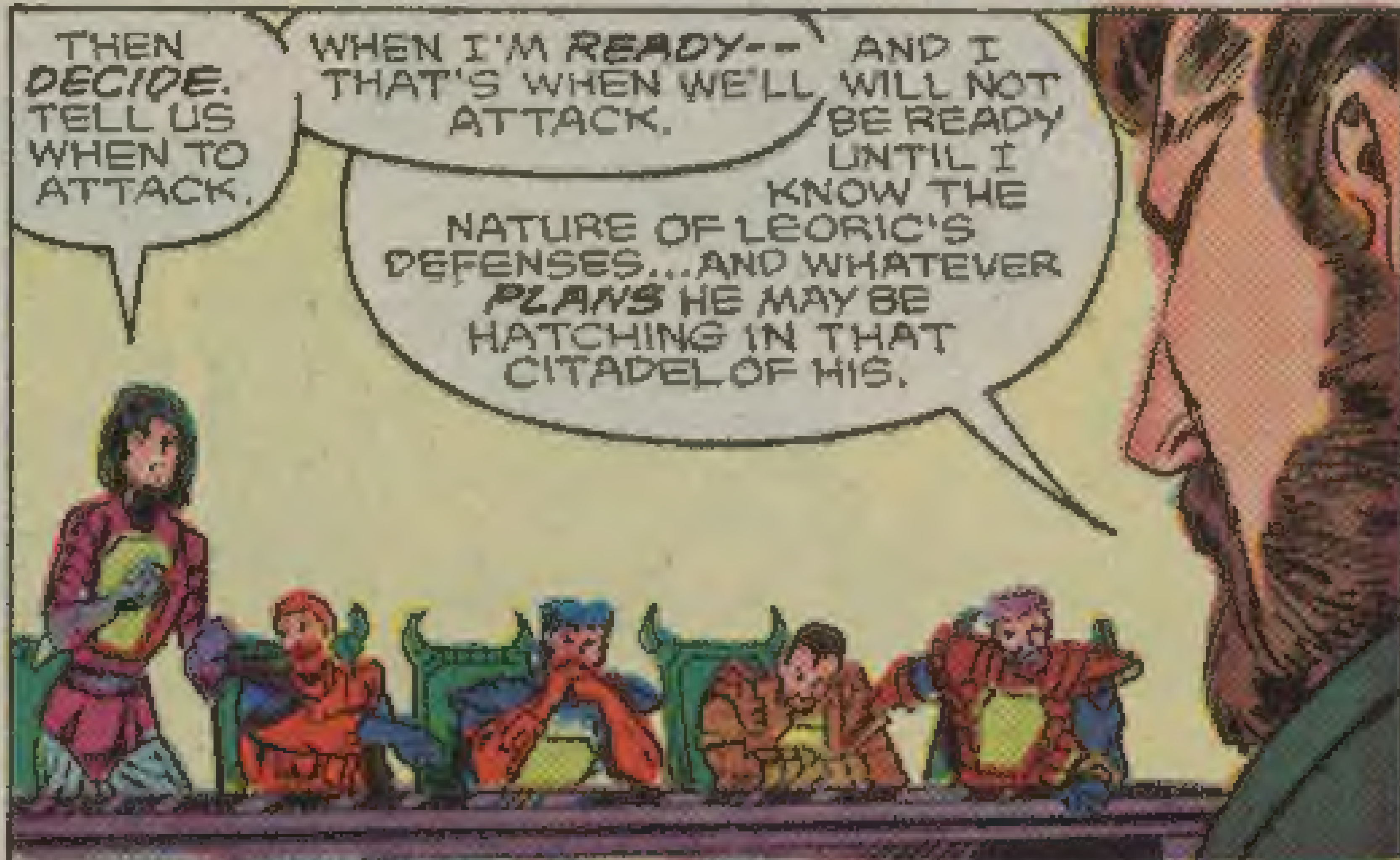


THEN DECIDE. TELL US WHEN TO ATTACK.

WHEN I'M READY--

AND I WILL NOT BE READY UNTIL I

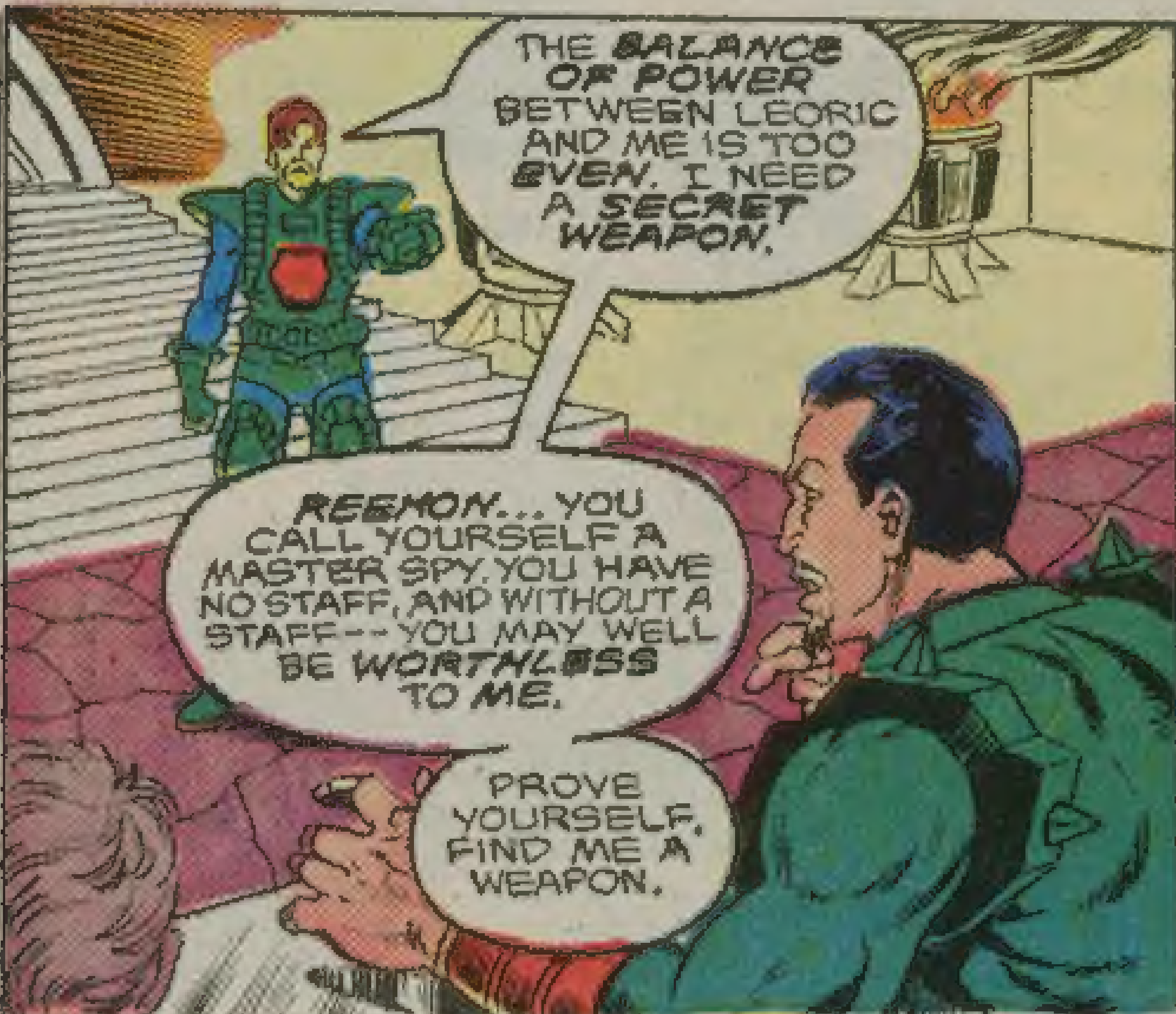
KNOW THE NATURE OF LEORIC'S DEFENSES...AND WHATEVER PLANS HE MAY BE HATCHING IN THAT CITADEL OF HIS.



THE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN LEORIC AND ME IS TOO EVEN. I NEED A SECRET WEAPON.

REEKON... YOU CALL YOURSELF A MASTER SPY. YOU HAVE NO STAFF, AND WITHOUT A STAFF-- YOU MAY WELL BE WORTHLESS TO ME.

PROVE YOURSELF. FIND ME A WEAPON.



THEN, WITH A NEW WEAPON IN HAND, I WILL CRUSH LEORIC'S CITADEL...GRIND THE STONES BENEATH MY FEET...AND MARCH OVER HIS BONES TO VICTORY!



ONCE THIS WAS A FLOURISHING COMMUNITY, A HUB OF COMMERCE DURING THE DAYS OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY; NOW IT IS LITTLE MORE THAN A SLUM IN THE SHADOW OF DARKSTORM'S CASTLE, AND THE AIR IS THICK WITH DESPERATION.

BUT FOR REEKON AND MORTRED, WHO THRIVE ON THE DESPAIR OF OTHERS, THE AIR IS SWEETER THAN THE MOST PLEASANT PERFUME.

I TELL YOU, MORTRED, IT'S HUMILIATING.

JUST BECAUSE WE HAVE NO STAFFS, DARKSTORM SENDS US ON THE LOWEST OF MISSIONS-- TO GET HIS ARMOR CLEANED BY SOME THIRD-RATE BLACKSMITH.

I THINK IT'S A PRIVILEGE, REEKON.

WHAT?

ANY MISSION FOR MY LORD DARKSTORM IS AN HONOR OF THE HIGHEST ORDER, AND THIS MAN HARKON IS NO SIMPLE BLACKSMITH.

BEFORE THE AGE OF MAGIC BEGAN, HE WAS A BRILLIANT ENGINEER-- A SCIENTIST.

SO WHAT?

WHAT GOOD IS A SCIENTIST IN A WORLD OF MAGIC? ABOUT AS MUCH USE AS AN EXTRA NOSE.

IT'S A NEW AGE, MORTRED, AND THE OLD SKILLS DON'T MUCH MATTER ANY MORE. JUDGE A MAN BY HIS STRENGTH, NOT HIS BRAINS, THAT'S WHAT I SAY...

BRILLIANT OR NOT, HE'S JUST ANOTHER BLACKSMITH NOW.

EH? WHAT IS THIS PLACE...?

HARKON'S BLACKSMITH SHOP, REEKON.

KEEP PUMPING THOSE *BELLOWS*, FOOL

IF THAT FIRE LOSES HEAT, I'LL REFUEL THE FLAMES WITH YOUR *HIDE*!

DARKSTORM WANTS HIS ARMOR REFINISHED, HARKON.



ANYTHING TO GET AWAY FROM THAT *HEAT*, NEVER SWEATED SO MUCH IN ALL MY LIFE, BEFORE I STARTED SMITHING.

MAN GETS USED TO AIR CONDITIONING, GETS USED TO LIVING SOFT... GETS *WEAK*.

YOU HARDLY LOOK--WEAK, MY FRIEND.

HARKON, THIS IS REEKON. HE ADMIRES STRENGTH

UH-HUH.

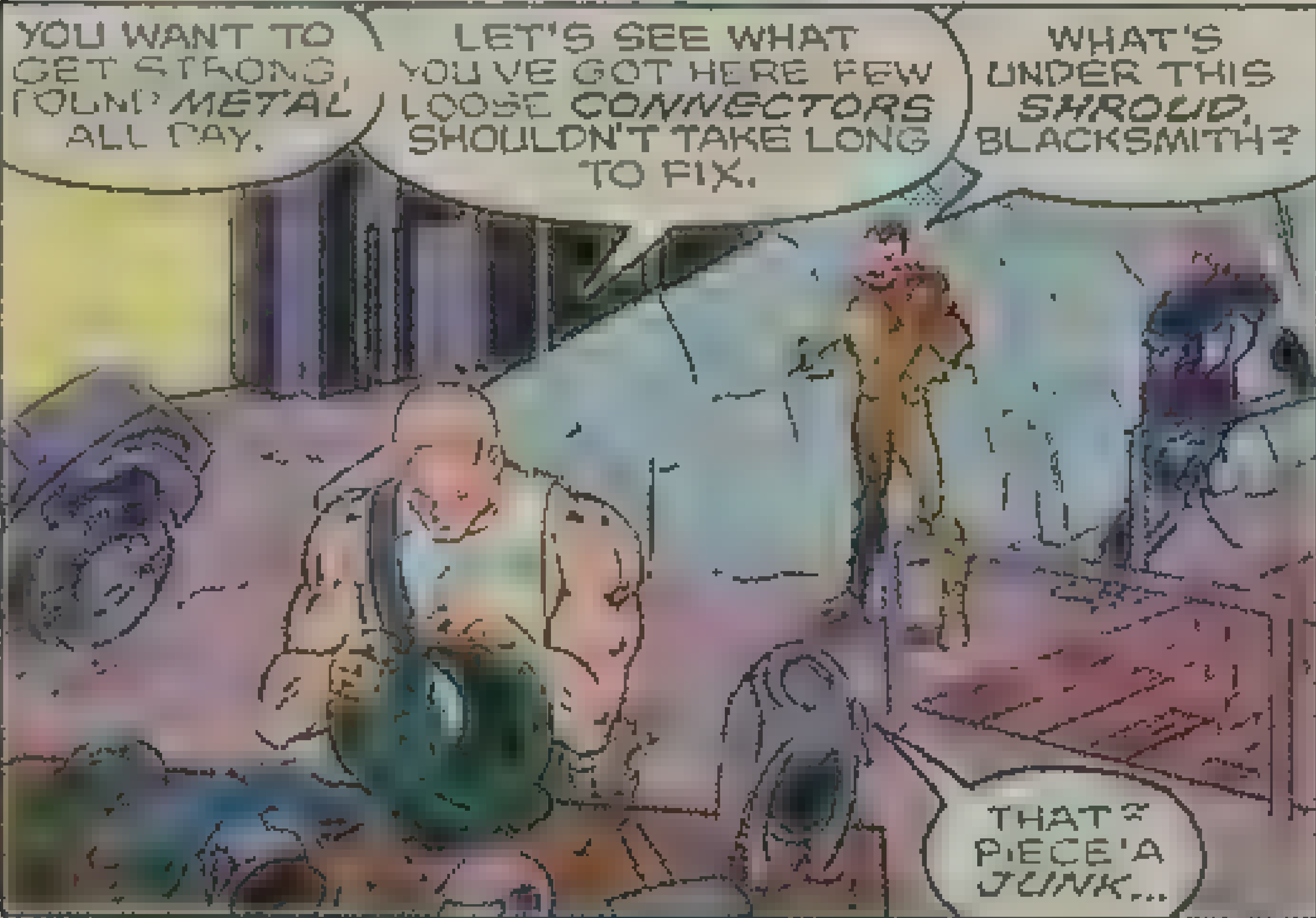


YOU WANT TO GET STRONG, FOUNDED METAL ALL DAY.

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT HERE FEW LOOSE *CONNECTORS* SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG TO FIX.

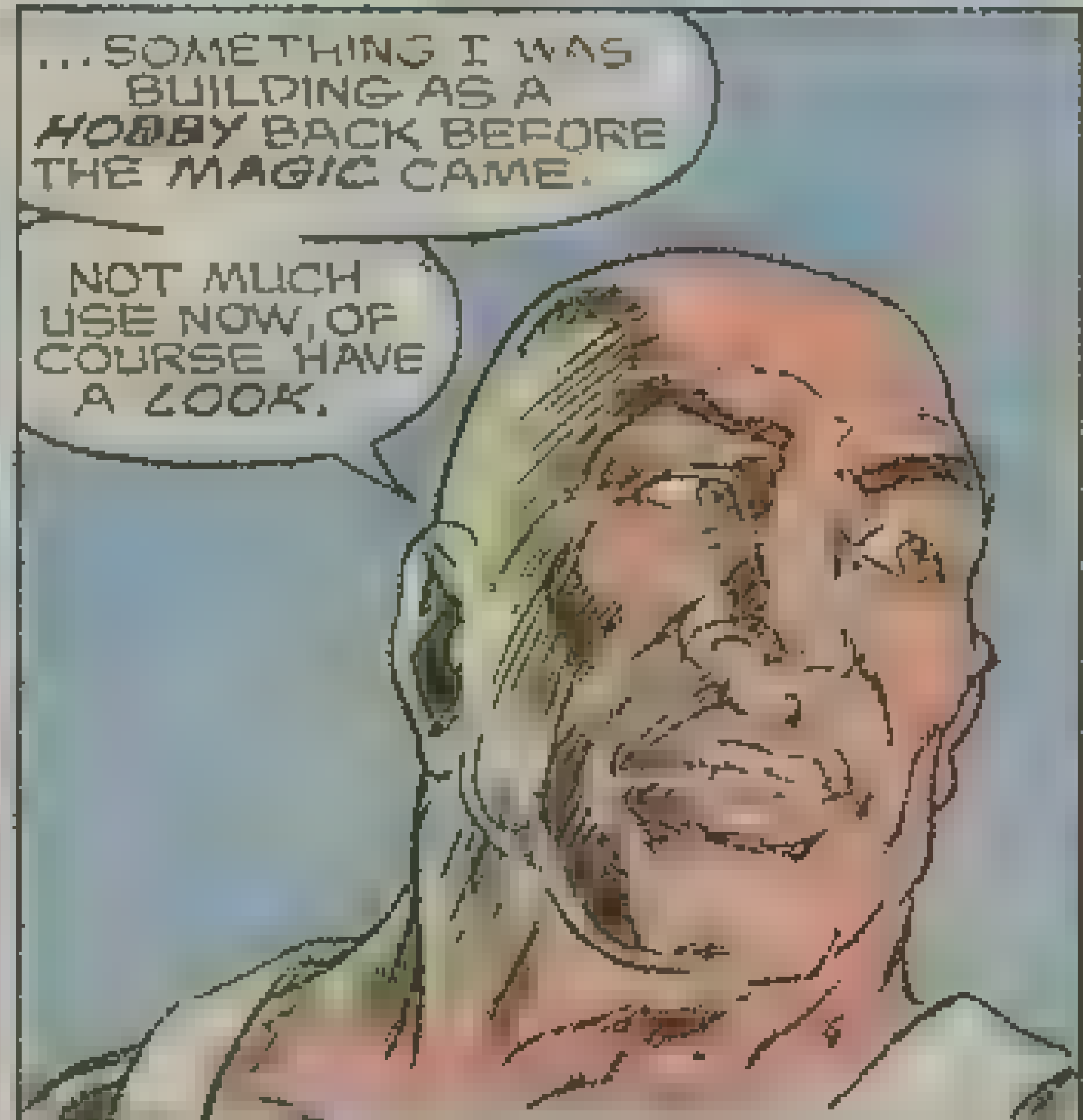
WHAT'S UNDER THIS *SHROUD*, BLACKSMITH?

THAT? PIECE A *JUNK*...



...SOMETHING I WAS BUILDING AS A *HOBBY* BACK BEFORE THE *MAGIC* CAME.

NOT MUCH USE NOW, OF COURSE HAVE A LOOK.



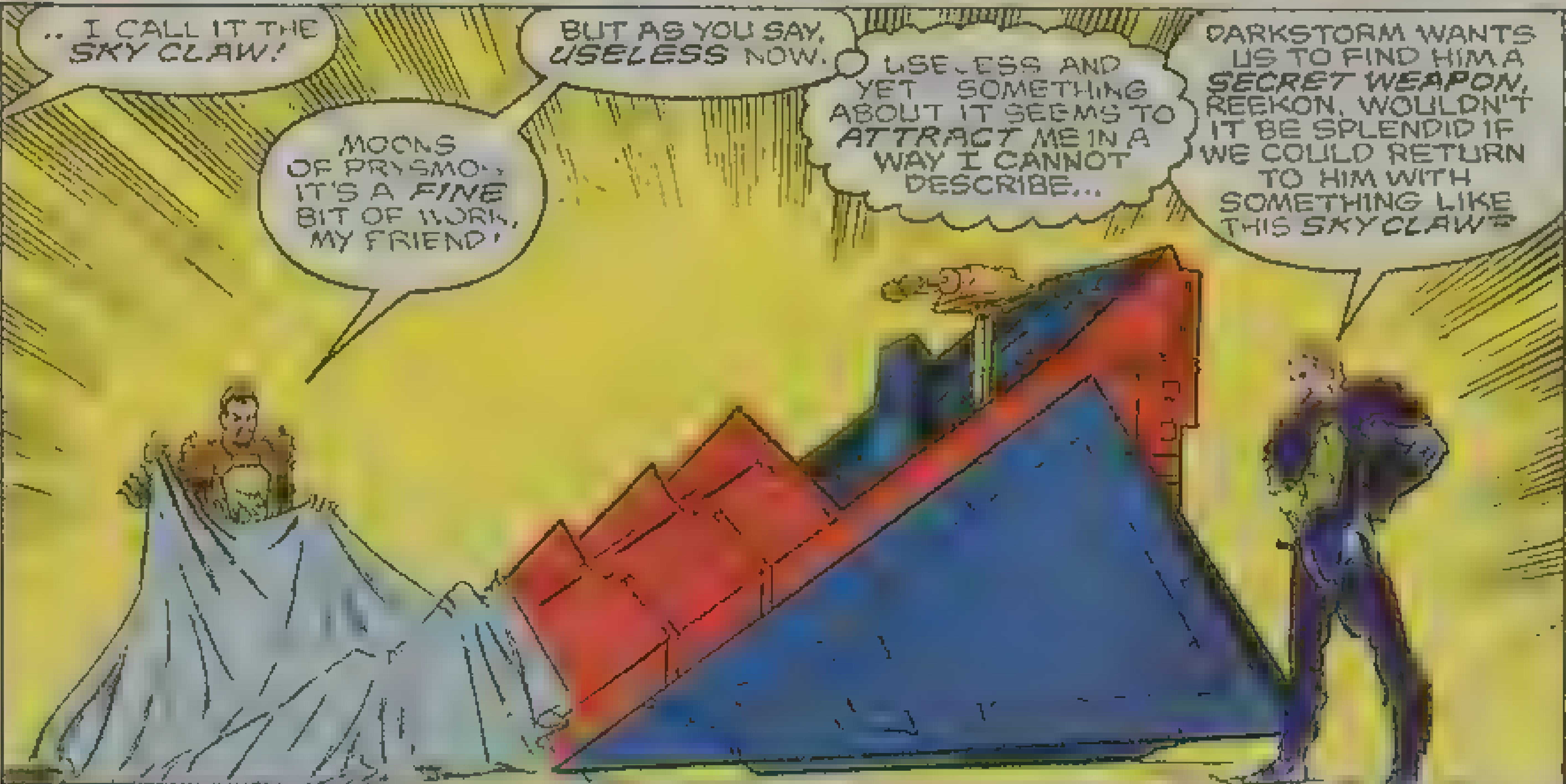
.. I CALL IT THE *SKY CLAW*!

MOONS OF PRYSMO... IT'S A *FINE* BIT OF WORK, MY FRIEND!

BUT AS YOU SAY, *USELESS* NOW.

USELESS AND YET SOMETHING ABOUT IT SEEMS TO *ATTRACT* ME IN A WAY I CANNOT DESCRIBE...

DARKSTORM WANTS US TO FIND HIM A *SECRET WEAPON*, REEKON, WOULDN'T IT BE SPLENDID IF WE COULD RETURN TO HIM WITH SOMETHING LIKE THIS *SKYCLAW*?



SPLendid PERHAPS. BUT A FANTASY. SINCE MAGIC RETURNED TO THE WORLD, NOTHING ELECTRICAL WORKS

HARKON IS RIGHT. LOVELY AS THIS IS, IT'S NOTHING BUT A PIECE OF--

-- JUNK?

HARKON, WHAT'S HAPPENING?

HUH?

MAN, HOW'D YOU DO THAT? THE SHIP'S LIT UP LIKE A HOLIDAY BUSH--AND THE ENGINE'S PURRIN' LOUD AS A WELL-FED CAT!

ALL I DID WAS TOUCH IT. IT FELT AS IF MY HAND WERE ON FIRE SOMEHOW, AND THE FIRE PASSED FROM ME INTO THE SHIP...

FANTASTIC! I HAVEN'T HEARD THE HUM OF SERVOS AND TURBINES IN YEARS!

AND ALL YOU DID WAS--

-- TOUCH IT?

STARS!

MORTDRED, LOOK! THE SYMBOL FROM YOUR CHEST PLATE-- IT'S TRANSFERRED TO THE WINGS OF THIS SHIP!

AND LISTEN-- THOUGH NEITHER OF US IS TOUCHING IT, THE CRAFT IS STILL HUMMING WITH LIFE!

REEKON, COULD THIS BE OUR POWER?

THE OTHERS HAVE STAFFS... AND WE HAVE THIS VEHICLE

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT, MORTDRED. TAKE THE PILOT'S POSITION. THE CRAFT WEARS YOUR SYMBOL AFTER ALL.

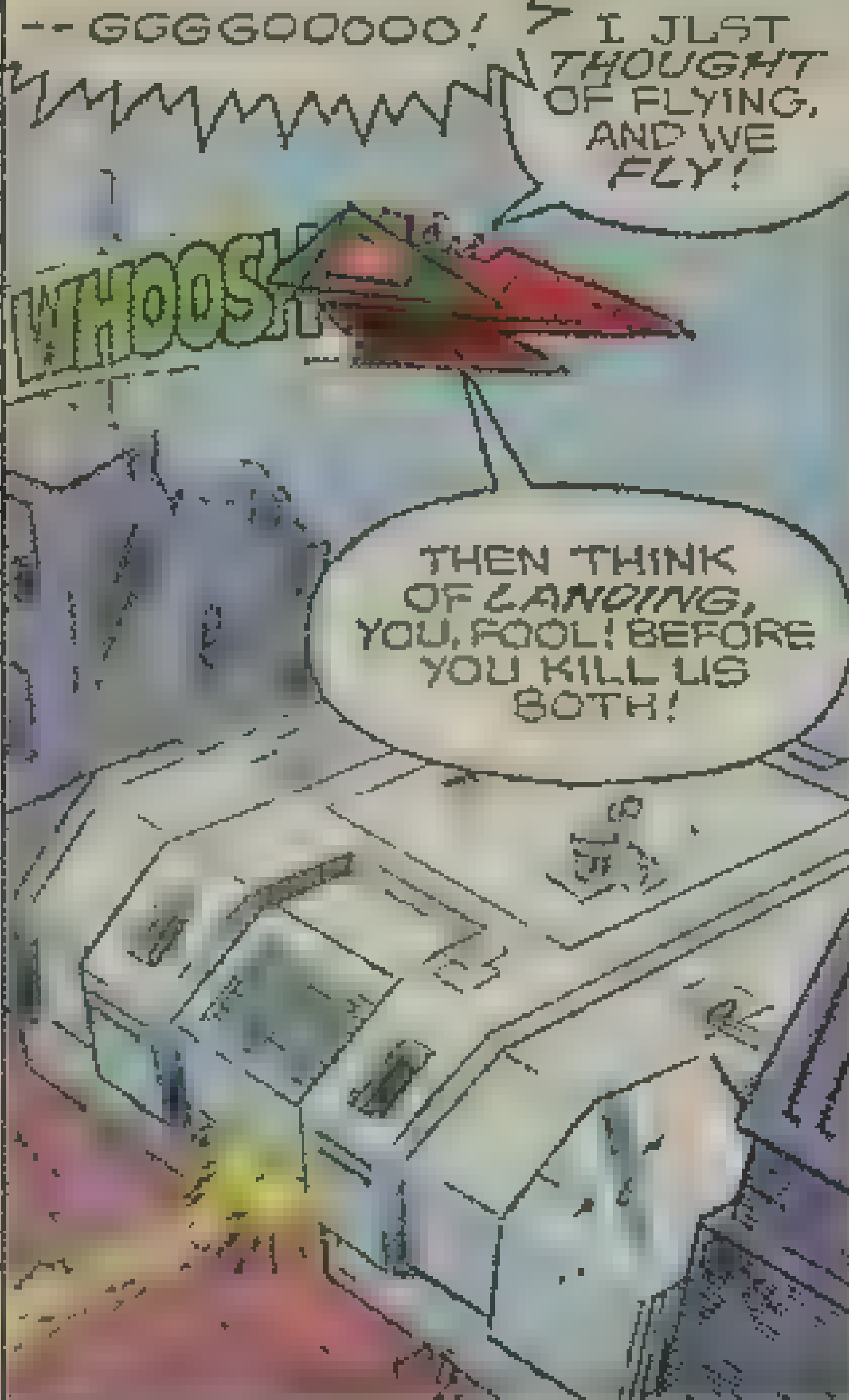
THOUGH WHY A WORM LIKE YOU SHOULD HAVE SUCH FORTUNE, I'LL NEVER KNOW.

SEAT BELTS. BETTER BUCKLE IN REEKON, BECAUSE HERE WE--

-- GGGG00000! I JUST THOUGHT OF FLYING, AND WE FLY!

WHOOOSH!

THEN THINK OF *LANDING*, YOU, FOOL! BEFORE YOU KILL US BOTH!



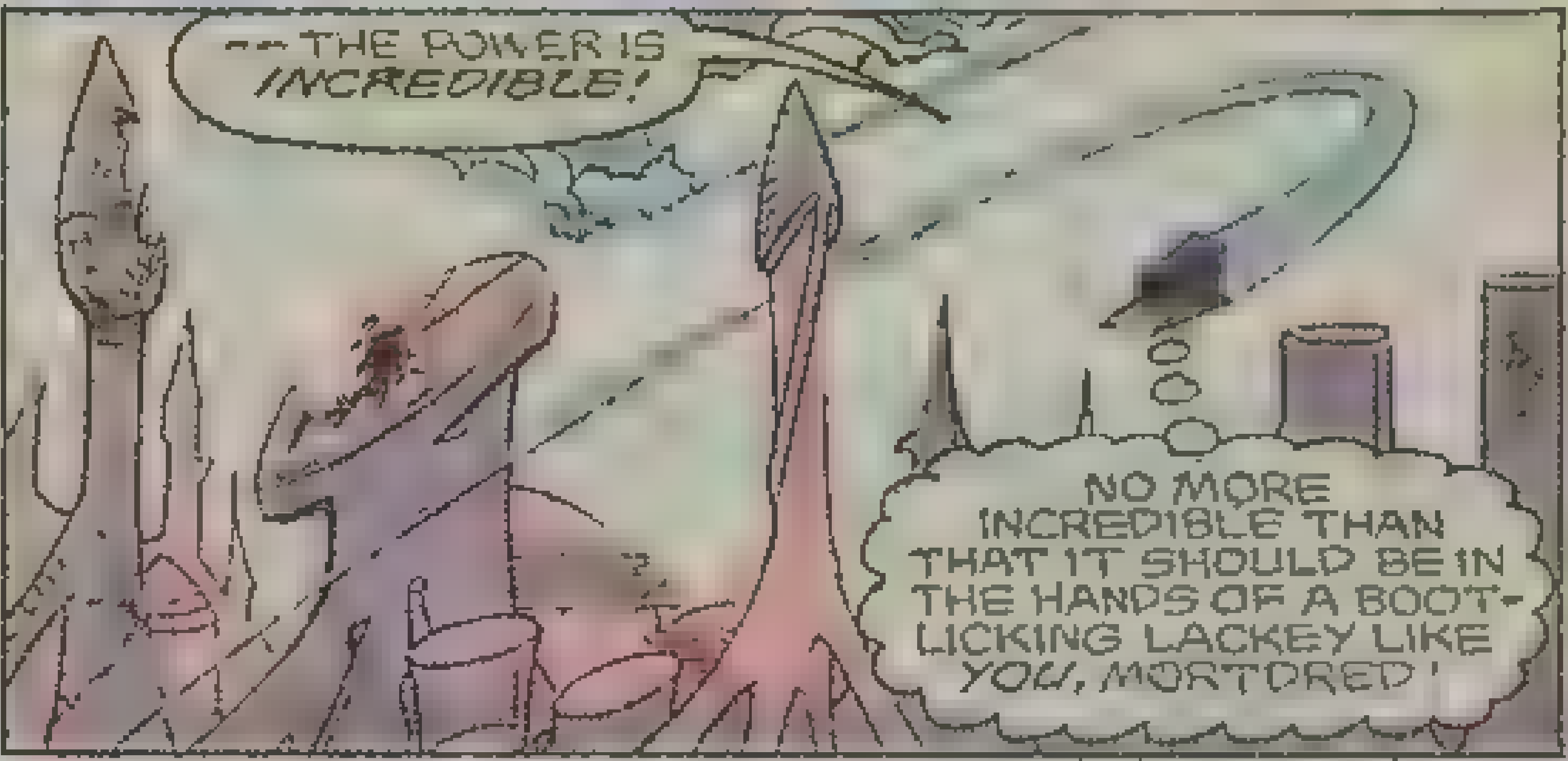
REEKON, YOU CAN'T *IMAGINE* THE POWER I FEEL! THE CRAFT RESPONDS TO MY EVERY THOUGHT, MY EVERY WHIM!

I THINK LEFT, WE BANK LEFT! I WISH FOR RIGHT, WE BANK RIGHT! UP, DOWN, FAST, SLOW--



-- THE POWER IS INCREDIBLE!

NO MORE INCREDIBLE THAN THAT IT SHOULD BE IN THE HANDS OF A BOOT-LICKING LACKEY LIKE YOU, MORTDRED!



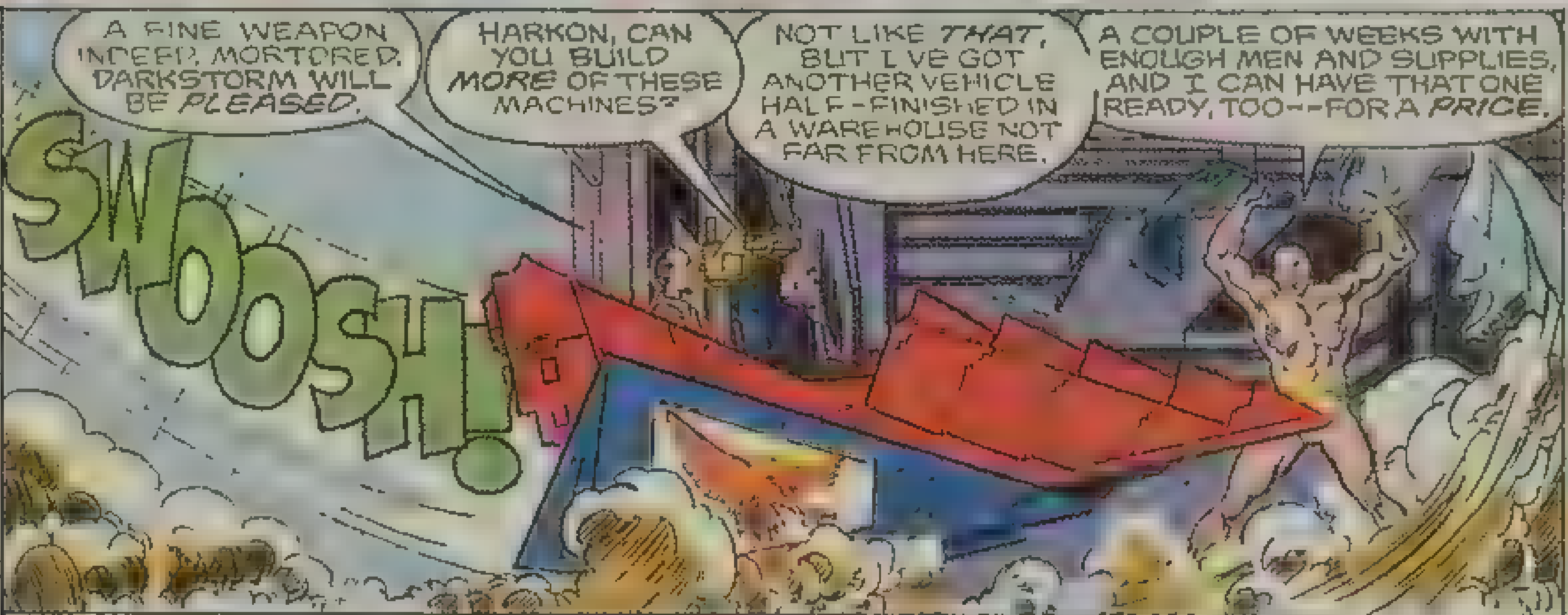
A FINE WEAPON INDEED, MORTDRED. DARKSTORM WILL BE PLEASED.

HARKON, CAN YOU BUILD MORE OF THESE MACHINES?

NOT LIKE THAT, BUT I'VE GOT ANOTHER VEHICLE HALF-FINISHED IN A WAREHOUSE NOT FAR FROM HERE.

A COUPLE OF WEEKS WITH ENOUGH MEN AND SUPPLIES, AND I CAN HAVE THAT ONE READY, TOO--FOR A PRICE.

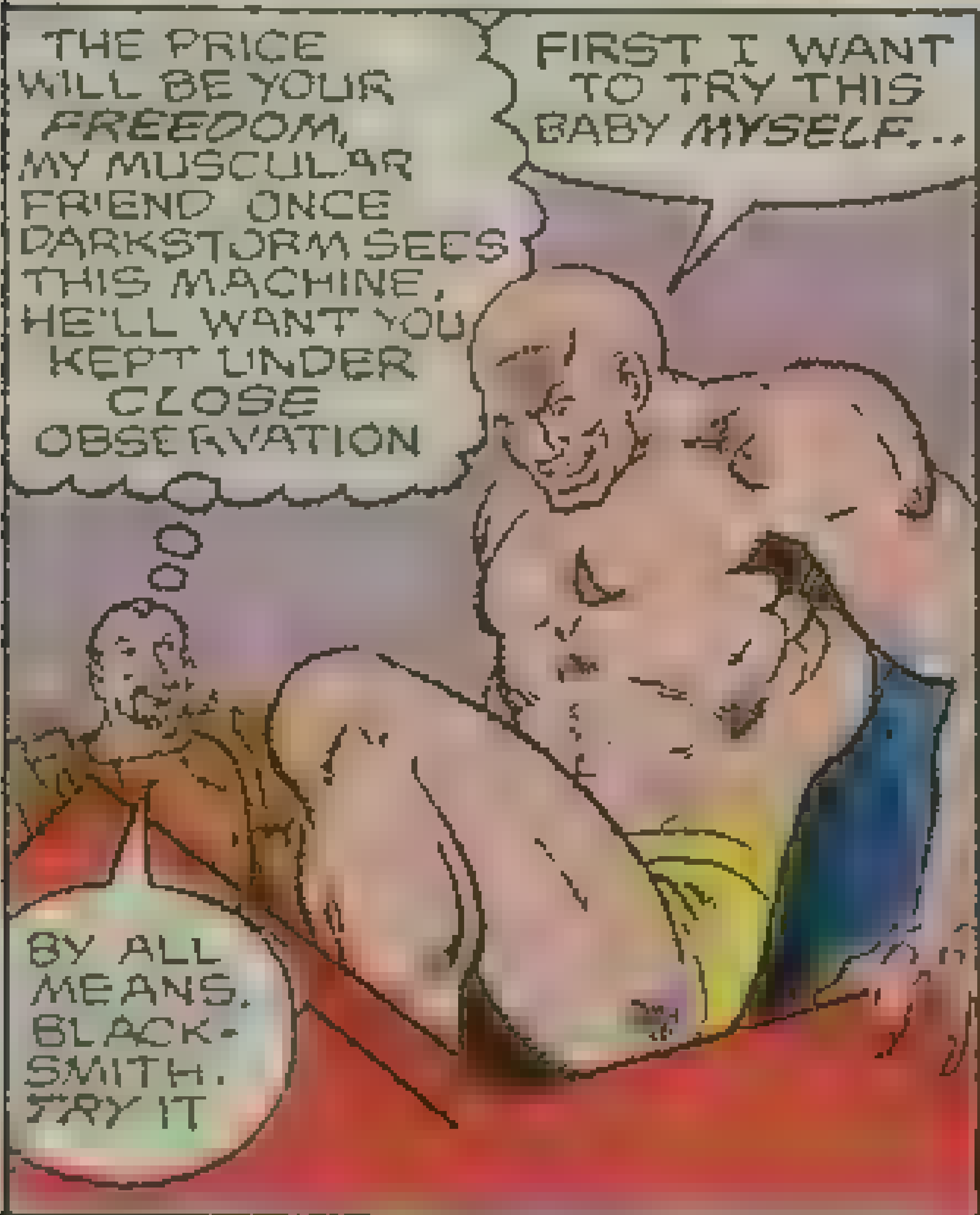
SWOOSH!



THE PRICE WILL BE YOUR *FREEDOM*, MY MUSCULAR FRIEND. ONCE DARKSTORM SEES THIS MACHINE, HE'LL WANT YOU KEPT UNDER CLOSE OBSERVATION

FIRST I WANT TO TRY THIS BABY MYSELF...

BY ALL MEANS, BLACKSMITH. TRY IT



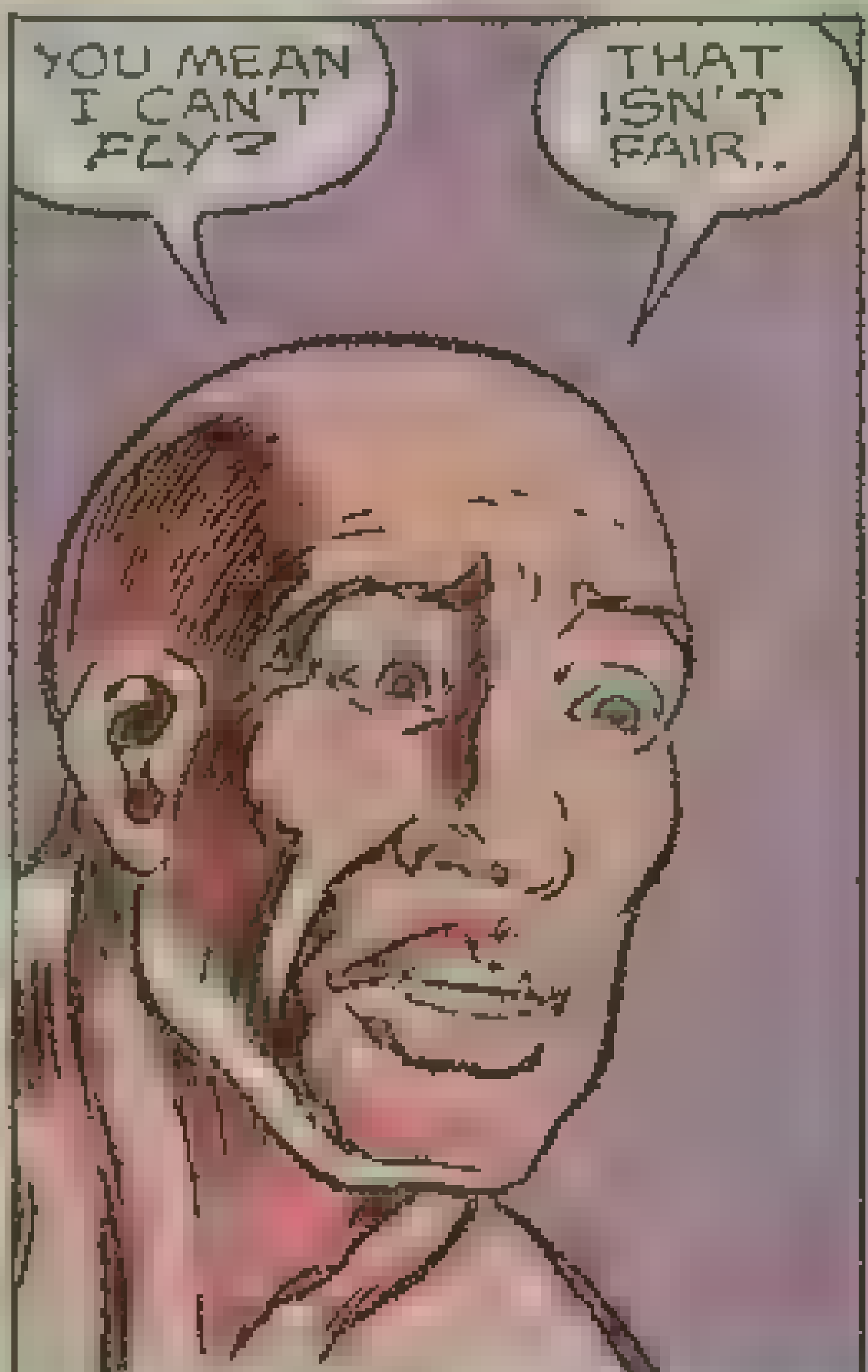
HEY, NOTHING'S HAPPENING... IT'S JUST SITTING HERE.

THEN IT'S TRUE ONLY WE HAVE THE POWER--MERKLYN'S GIFT!



YOU MEAN I CAN'T FLY?

THAT ISN'T FAIR..



IT ISN'T
FAIR!

WHO
SAID
LIFE WAS
FAIR YOU
FOOL?

HAHAHAHA!

MOMENTS LATER AT
DARKSTORM'S CASTLE...

I NEED INFORMATION,
CRAVEX--I NEED TO KNOW
WHAT LEORIC IS PLANNING,
I NEED TO KNOW THE
DETAILS OF HIS
DEFENSES.

A TRICKY
SITUATION,
MY LORD.

SEND A SPY TO LEORIC'S
STRONGHOLD, AND YOU
MIGHT--EH?

I DON'T BELIEVE
IT! IT ISN'T
POSSIBLE!

WHAT ISN'T
POSSIBLE? OUT OF
THE WAY, CRAVEX!
I CAN'T--

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, A
LORD KNOWN AS DARKSTORM LEFT ON
SPEECHLESS WITH AN ANGEL.

THE
ANGEL WAS A
MAYHEM RUNG
TO THE CASTLE
IN CRANE CRAWL
FOR THE FIRST
TIME. HE WAS
A
WARRIOR.

AH, MY LORD--WE HAD YOUR ARMOR
REPAIRED, AS YOU COMMANDED. THE
SMITH SAID IT REQUIRED ONLY A FEW
ADJUSTMENTS--NOTHING MAJOR, A
SIMPLE PIECE OF--

MORTDRED! FORGET
MY ARMOR AND TELL ME
HOW YOU COME TO BE
FLYING IN SUCH A
CRAFT!

AND BE
QUICK,
BEFORE I
HAVE YOUR
HEAD
BRONZED!

WHAT,
THIS
LITTLE
THING...?

A FEW BRIEF WORDS
OF EXPLANATION, AND

OUT OF THAT CRAFT,
BOTH OF YOU! I MUST
TEST IT FOR MYSELF!
IF WHAT YOU SAY
IS TRUE--

--THIS IS JUST
THE WEAPON I
NEED TO TIP
THE BALANCE
OF POWER!

AND AS THE SKY CLAW
RESPONDS TO DARKSTORM'S
MENTAL COMMAND, HIS
LAUGHTER ECHOES OVER
HIS DARK DOMAIN...

LIKE THE LOW
RUMBLE OF
DISTANT THUNDER.

THAT NIGHT, AS THE DARKLING LORDS GATHER FOR A CELEBRATORY SUPPER IN THE CASTLE HALL, ALL THOUGHTS TURN TO THE FUTURE... AND EACH HEART THROBS WITH A CRAVING FOR POWER...

THINK OF IT, LORD DARKSTORM!

WITH AN ARMADA OF SUCH VEHICLES IN OUR CONTROL--BUILT BY HARKON AND OTHER SLAVES--THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN'T ACCOMPLISH!

MUNCH! FORGET AN ARMADA. USE SKY CLAW NOW. SNEAK INTO LERIC'S CASTLE. SMASH THEM ALL.

WOULD THAT BE WISE? AFTER ALL, WE DON'T KNOW WHAT POWERS THEY HAVE... WHAT DEFENSES PROTECT THEM.

WE SHOULDN'T RUSH INTO ANYTHING...

ALWAYS THE CAREFUL COWARD, EH, LEXOR?

CAREFUL YES, MY LORD. COWARD? NO.

NEVER MIND. THIS TIME I THINK YOU COUNSEL WISELY.

I'M NOT YET READY TO STRIKE. I NEED INFORMATION, I NEED DETAILS THEN WE'LL SMASH OUR ENEMIES TO DUST.

LOOKS TO ME LIKE DARKSTORM'S EVEN MORE RELUCTANT TO ACT NOW THAT HE'S GOT HIS SECRET WEAPON.

HE'S RIGHT TO BE CAUTIOUS...

PERHAPS TOO CAUTIOUS...

SMASH THEM, AND GRIND THEM LIKE WHEAT IN A MILL...

LISTEN TO HIM, IT'S ALMOST AS IF HE'D RATHER TALK ABOUT CRUSHING OUR FOES THAN DO IT!

IT MAKES ME WONDER...

...PERHAPS LEXOR ISN'T THE ONLY COWARD IN OUR MIST.

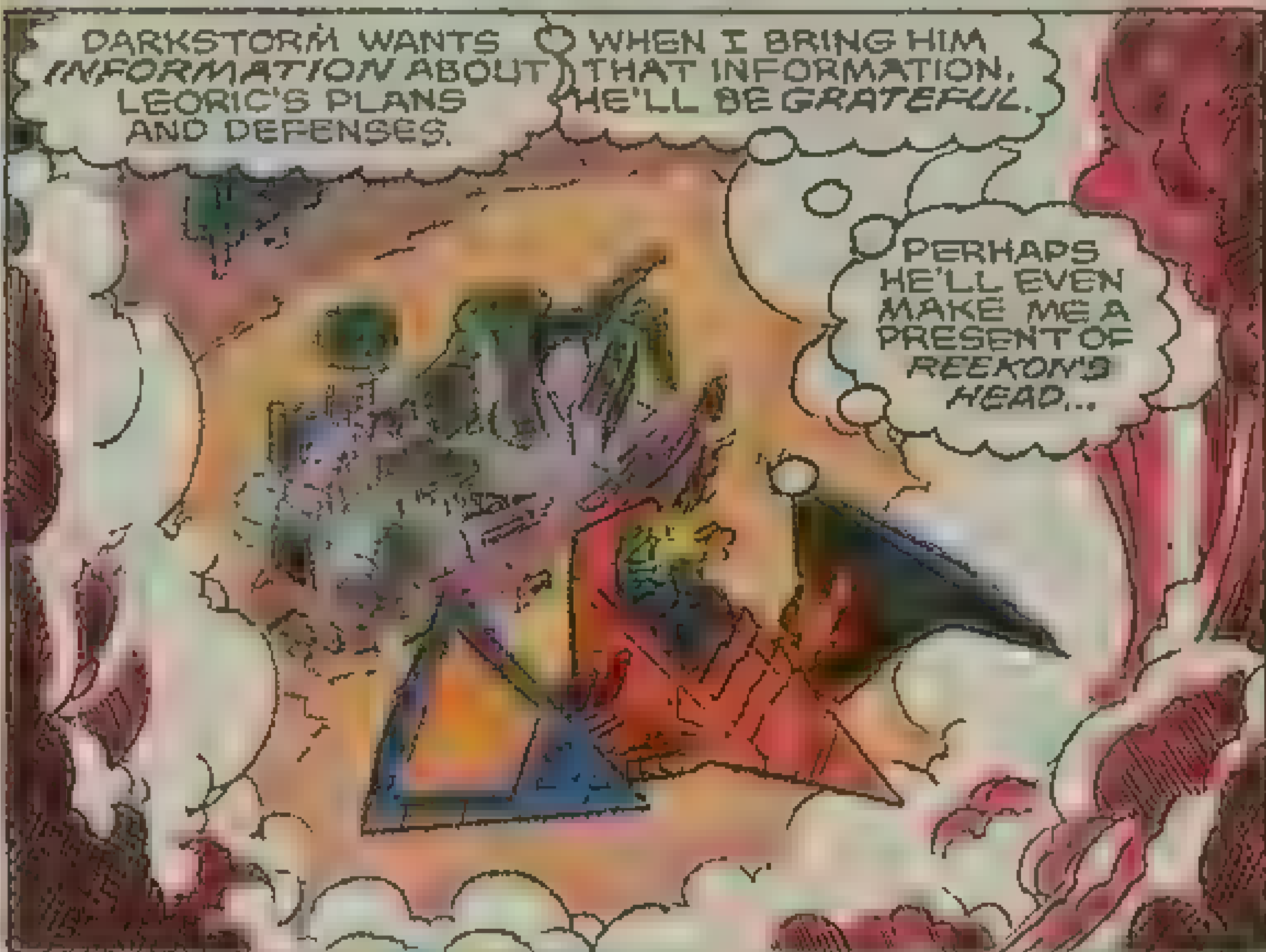
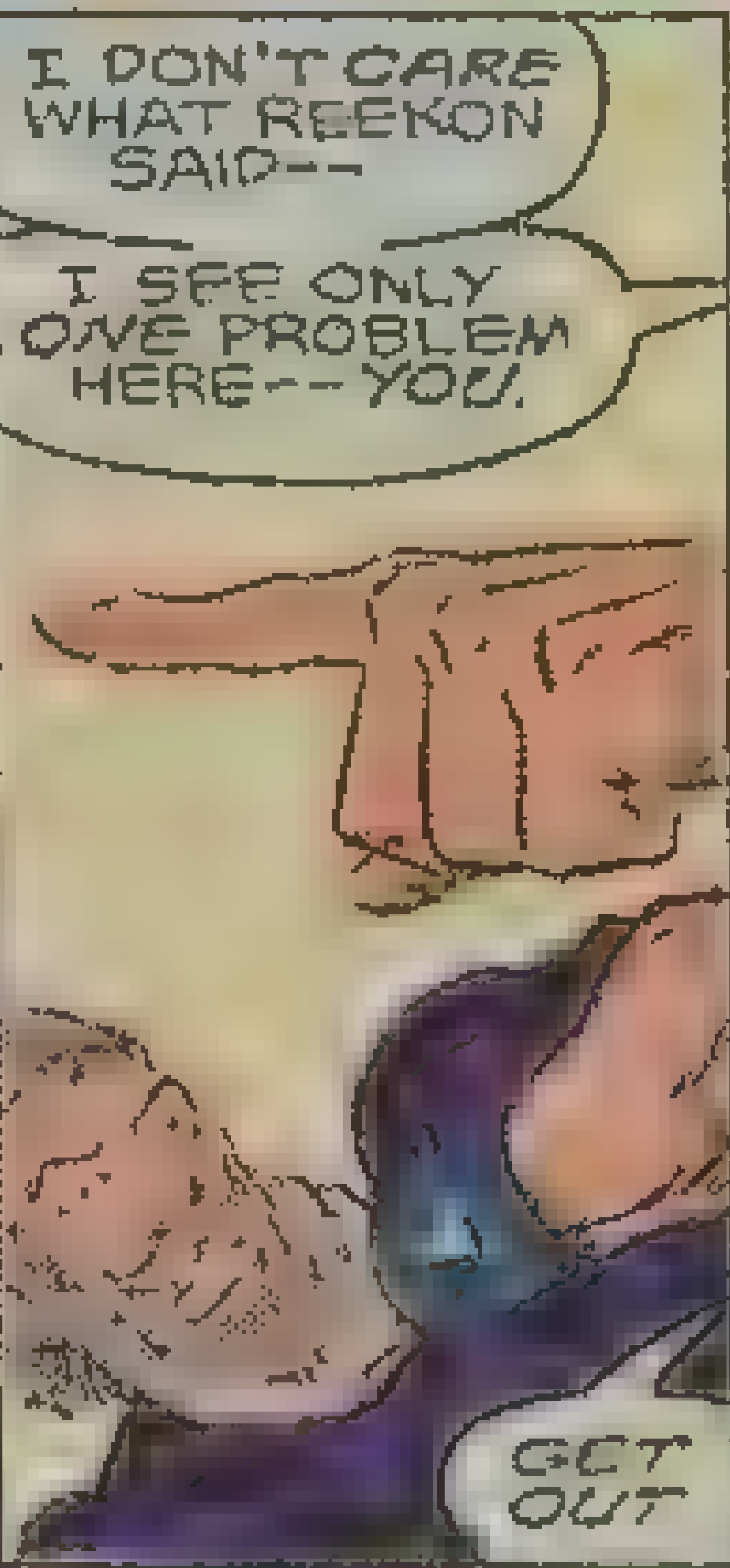
HOW DARE YOU?

GOOD! A FIGHT! ABOUT TIME!

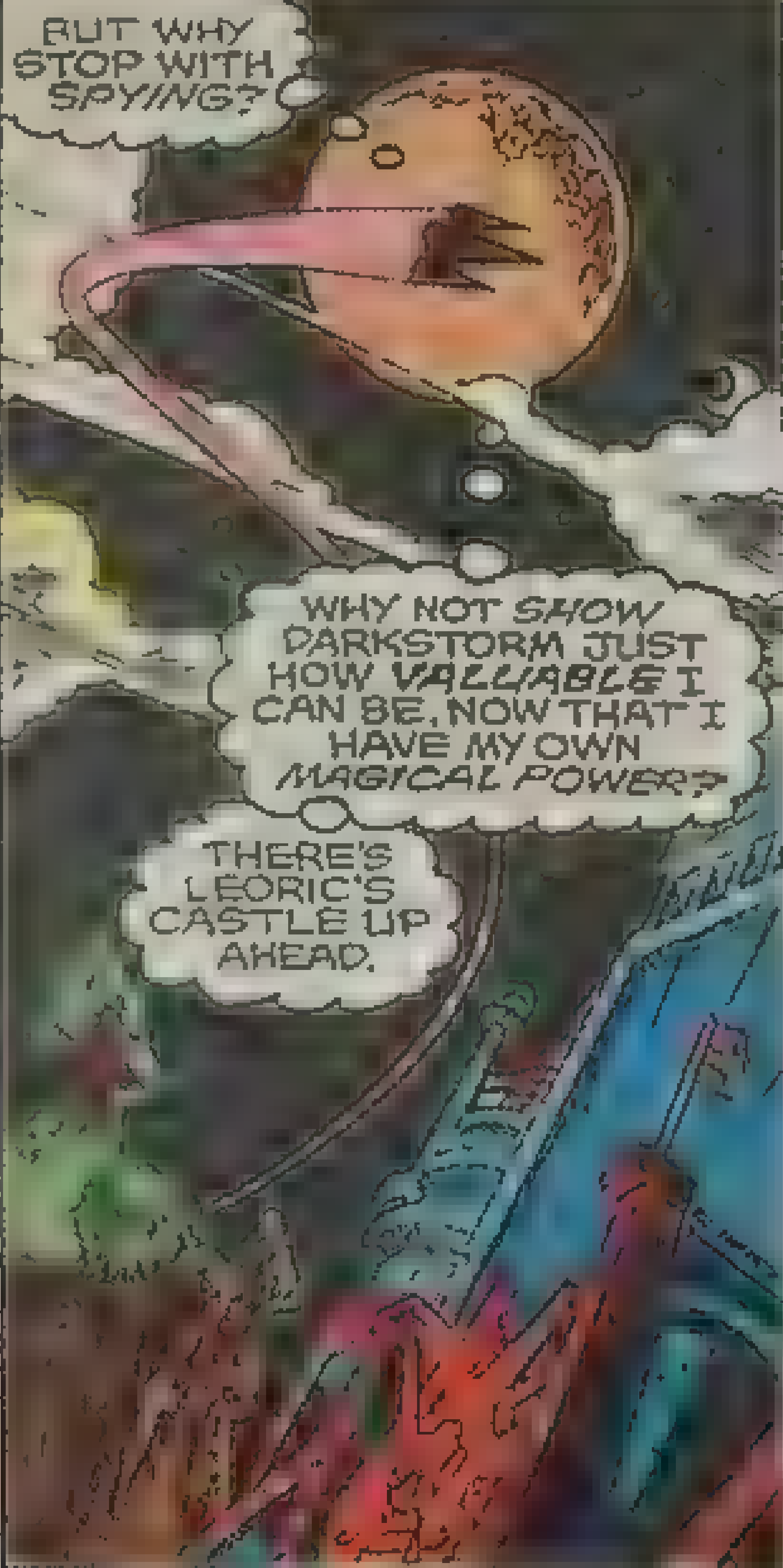
WHAM!

UUGGH!

MUNCH! GULP! HAMMM?



BUT WHY STOP WITH SPYING?



WHY NOT SHOW DARKSTORM JUST HOW VALUABLE I CAN BE, NOW THAT I HAVE MY OWN MAGICAL POWER?

THERE'S LEORIC'S CASTLE UP AHEAD.

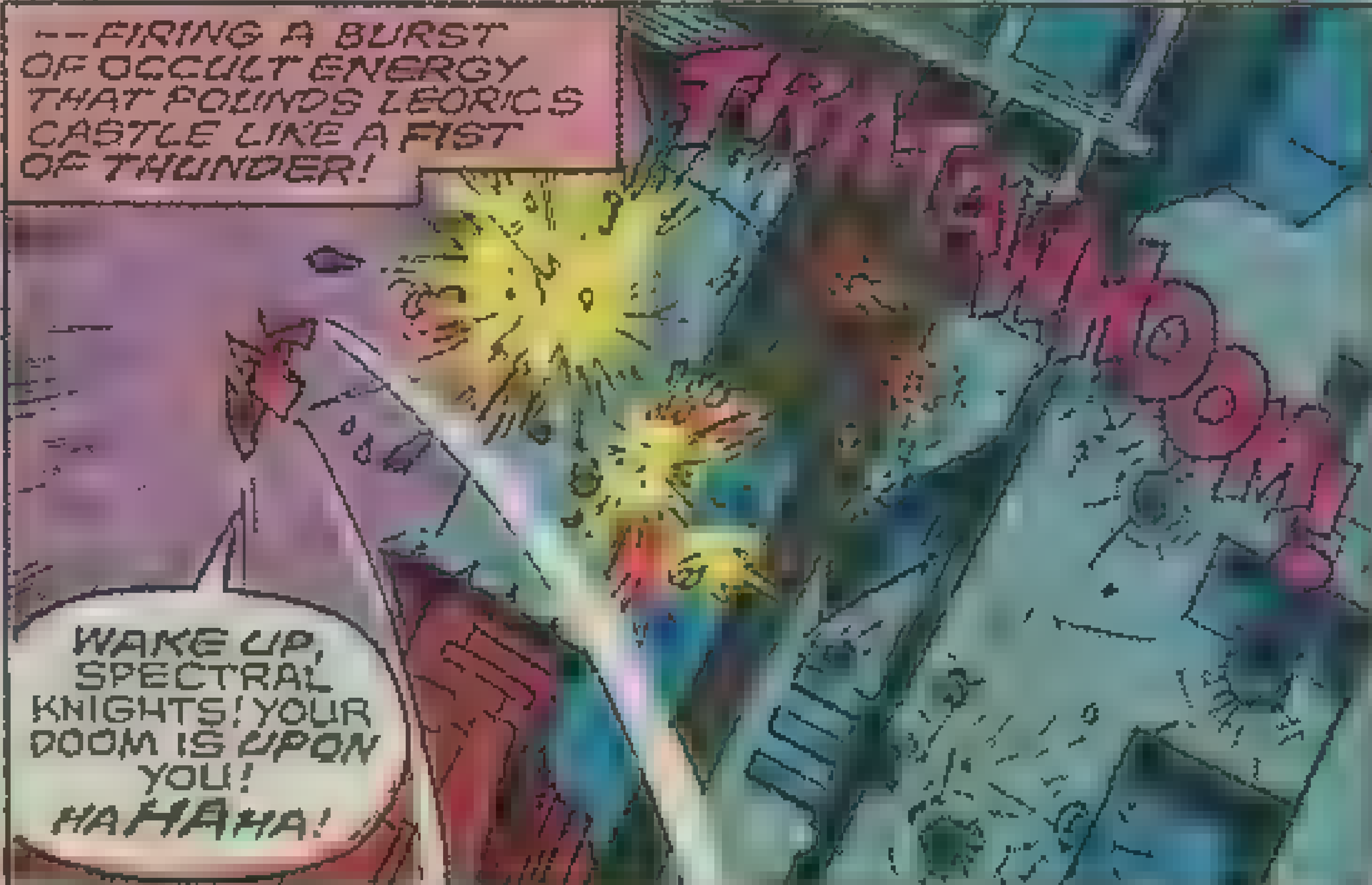
I'LL DO IT!

SKYCLAW, ATTACK!



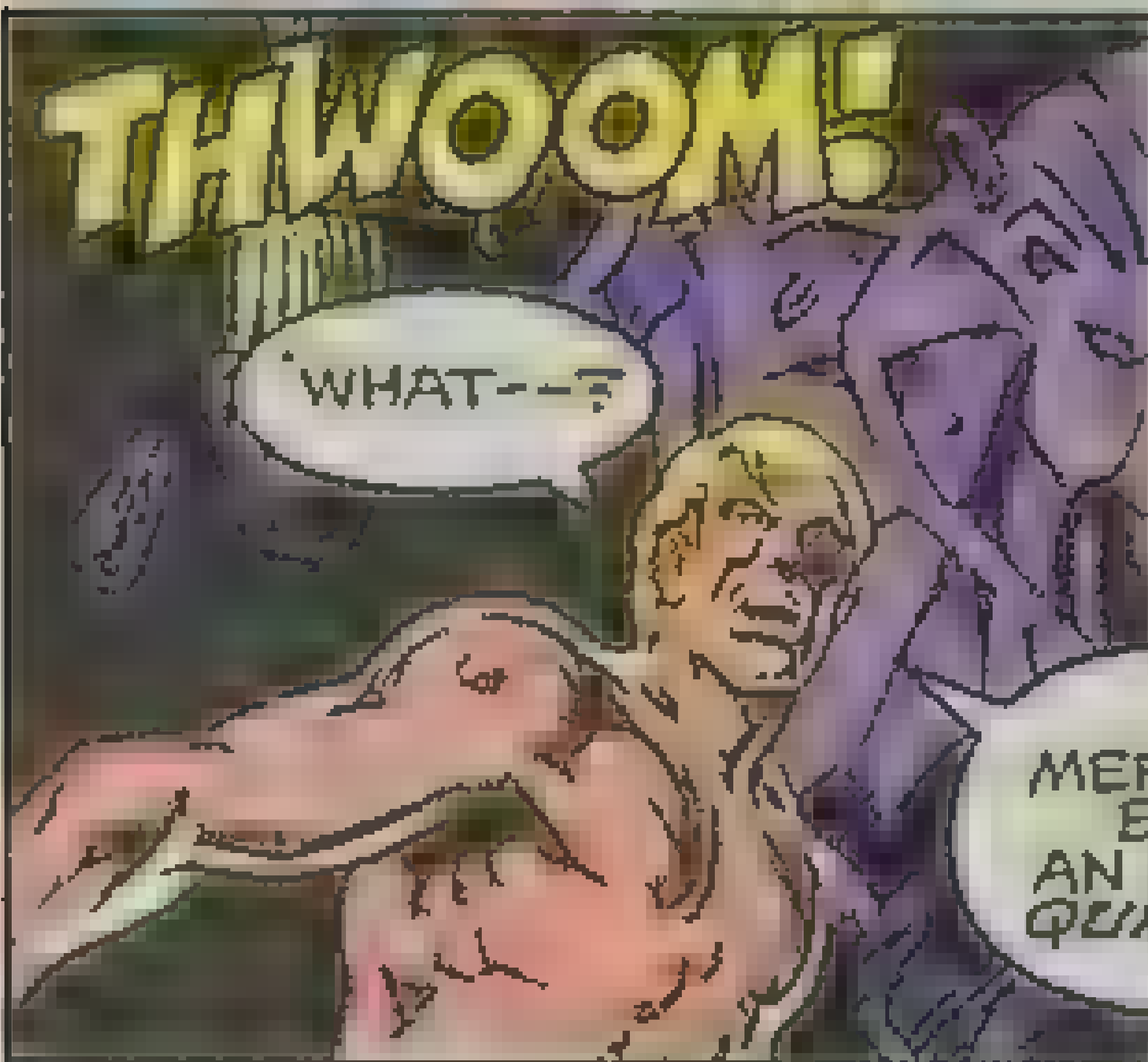
AND, LIKE A WILD STALLION, REARING WITH SAVAGE FURY, THE MYSTICALLY POWERED CRAFT RESPONDS, LASER CANNONS SLIDING INTO VIEW---

-- FIRING A BURST OF OCCULT ENERGY THAT POUNDS LEORIC'S CASTLE LIKE A FIST OF THUNDER!



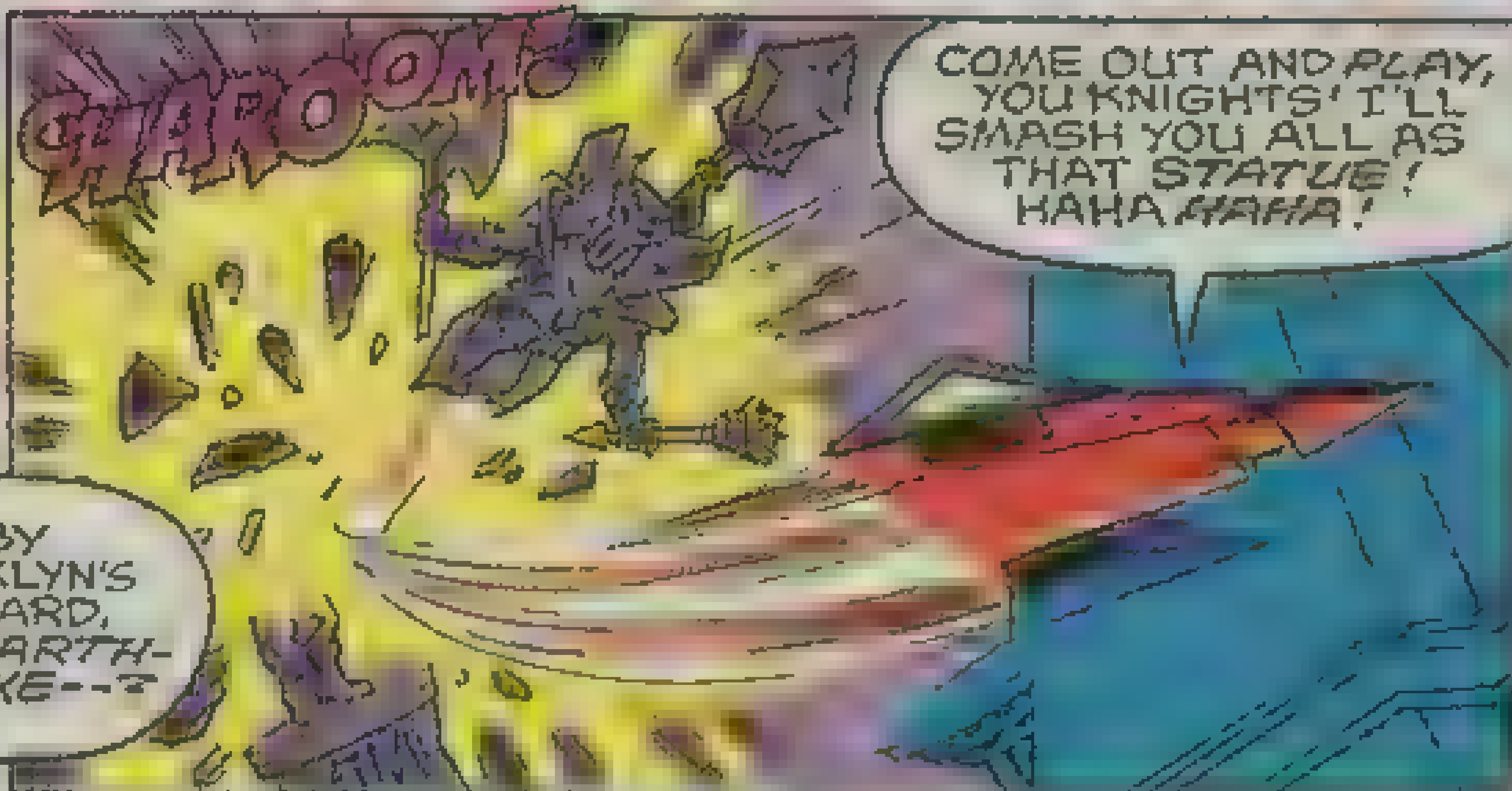
WAKE UP, SPECTRAL KNIGHTS! YOUR DOOM IS UPON YOU! HAHHAHA!

THWOOOM!



WHAT--?

BY MERKLYN'S BEARD, AN EARTH-QUAKE--?

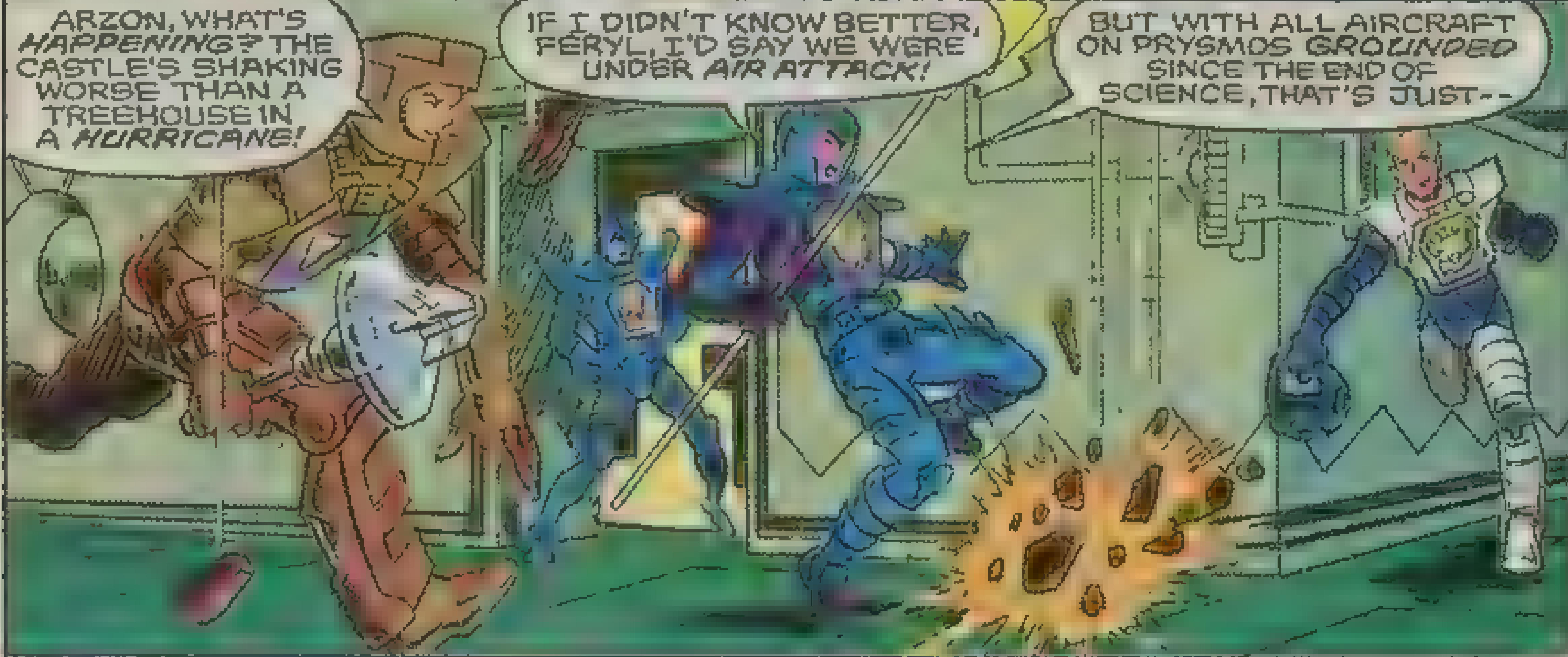


COME OUT AND PLAY, YOU KNIGHTS! I'LL SMASH YOU ALL AS THAT STATUE! HAHHAHA!

ARZON, WHAT'S HAPPENING? THE CASTLE'S SHAKING WORSE THAN A TREEHOUSE IN A HURRICANE!

IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, FERYL, I'D SAY WE WERE UNDER AIR ATTACK!

BUT WITH ALL AIRCRAFT ON PRYSMOS GROUNDED SINCE THE END OF SCIENCE, THAT'S JUST--



--IMPOSSIBLE?

THAT'S A SKY
SHIP! BUT HOW
CAN IT FLY?
NOTHING
THAT USES
ELECTRICITY
WORKS ANY
MORE!

OBVIOUSLY,
IT DOESN'T
ECTAR!

THAT CRAFT MUST
BE POWERED BY
MAGIC-- AND
IT'S UNDOUBTEDLY
PILOTED BY ONE
OF THE DARKLING
LORDS!

WHAT A DEADLY
COMBINATION!

ZAMM

ZAMM

ZAMM

WHA ZAMM!

WITH ALL OF
US ON FOOT, HOW
CAN WE DEFEND
OURSELVES AGAINST
SUCH A FOE?

A VOICE IN MY
THOUGHTS...
MERKLYN'S
VOICE...
FORMING
WORDS IN MY
MIND...

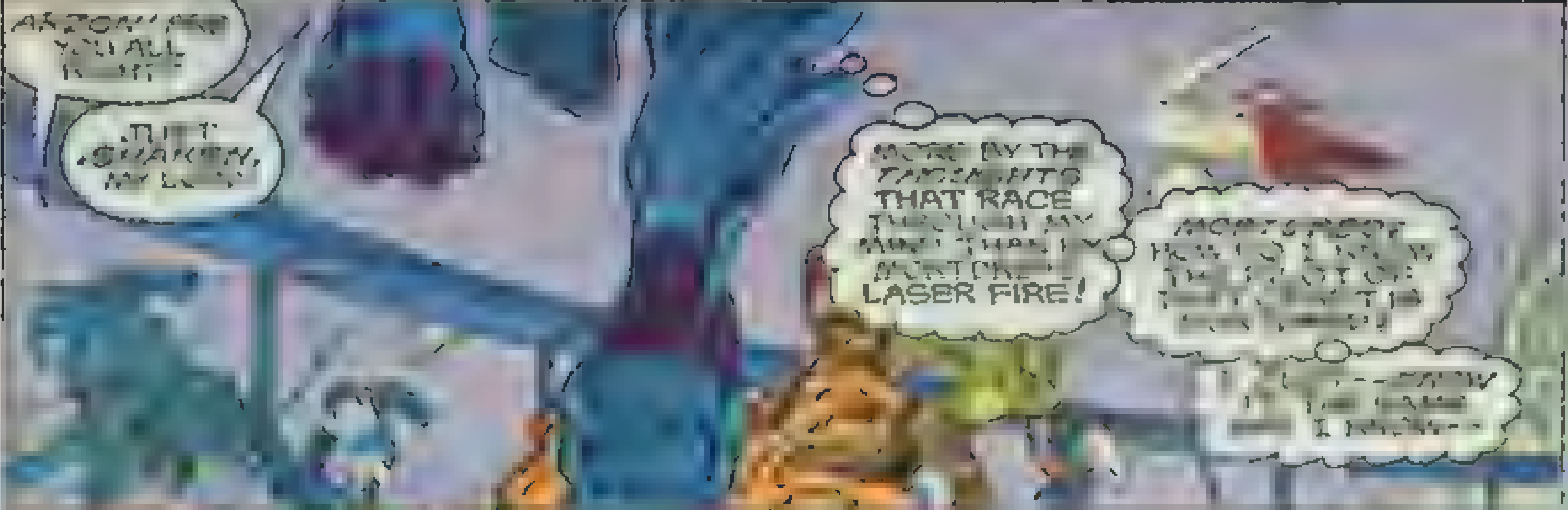
"A WHIM, A
THOUGHT, AND
MORE IS
SOUGHT."

"...AWAKE, MY MIND,
THY WILL BE
WROUGHT!"

GODS OF
PRYSMOS! IT'S
AS IF A LIGHT
WERE SHINING
THROUGH MY
BRAIN! SUDDENLY,
EVERYTHING I EVER
READ, EVERYTHING I
EVER KNEW--
RETURNS TO ME!

KNOWLEDGE!
MERKLYN'S
GIFT TO ME IS
THE MAGIC
POWER OF--

SHAWHOOM!



ARMY AND
YOU ALL
KILL IT!

IT'S
SHAKEN,
MY LOVE!

MORE BY THE
TENS INTO
THAT RACE
THROUGH MY
MIND THAN I
WANT TO
LASER FIRE!

MORTIMER
HOW DO I KNOW
THE SPOT OF
THE WEAKNESS
IS HERE?

WE CAN
FIND IT
I KNOW!



THE SHIP WITH
THE FACE, DEAD
CENTER ON ITS
WEAKNESS!

WATSON
WATSON!

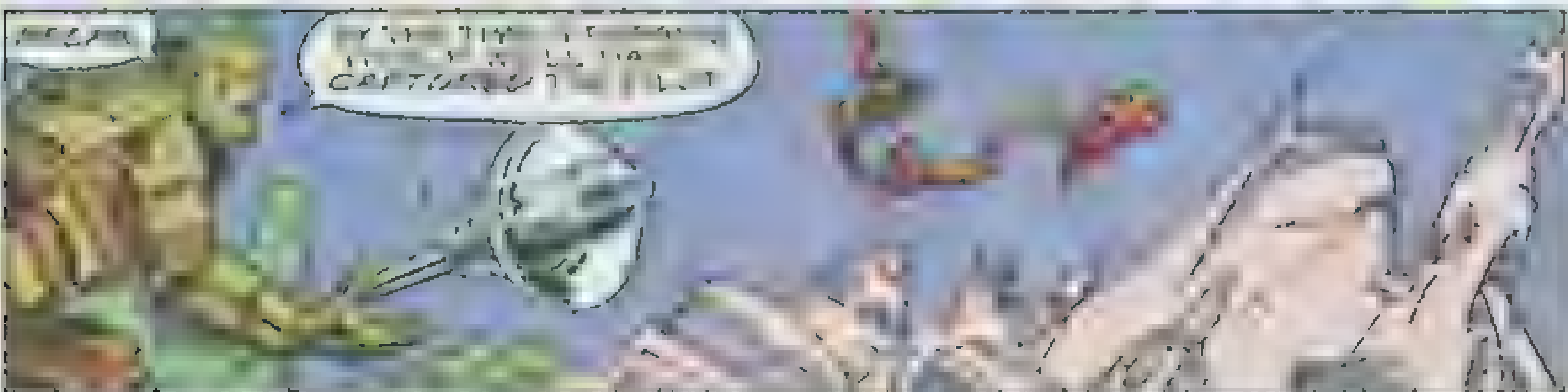


HA!



DO YOU
LIKE
THAT! YOU
CALL IT
A WEAKNESS!

I KNOW
THE CRAFT HAD
A WEAKNESS IN
JUST THAT SPOT!
BUT OUR
RESPITE WON'T
LAST LONG. I'M
AFRAID... THE
CRAFT HAS AN
AUTOMATIC
REPAIR
MODE.



REPAIR

THE CRAFT IS
CAPTURING THE
CRAFTSMAN!



THE WEAKNESS
IS OVER!
THE CRAFT
IS SHAKEN
AND THE
CRAFTSMAN
IS ON!

THE
CRAFTSMAN
IS ON!

I HAD A FEELING WE'D FIND **MORTORED** HERE, DOING SOMETHING **STUPID**, WHEN REEKON FOUND THE SKY CLAW MISSING.

HE'S MADE A PERFECT **BOTCH** OF THINGS--BUT THERE'S STILL A CHANCE WE CAN SALVAGE SOMETHING FROM THIS NIGHT'S FIASCO!

DARKLING LORDS! PICK YOUR ADVERSARY-- AND DESTROY HIM!

WITH **PLEASURE**, MY NOBLE LIEGE!

I'VE BEEN ACHING FOR A REMATCH WITH THESE SO-CALLED **KNIGHTS!**

KRAK!

HAH!

UNNN!

THE DARKLING LORDS CAUGHT US BY **SURPRISE**-- WITH OUR DEFENSES **DOWN**, OUR PEOPLE STILL REELING FROM THAT AIR ATTACK!

WORSE, THEY'RE **MOUNTED** AND WE'RE **AFOOT**-- GIVING THEM THE TACTICAL ADVANTAGE!

SOMEHOW I HAVE TO **EVEN** THE ODDS AGAINST US!

PERHAPS BY LAUNCHING AN "AIR ATTACK" OF MY OWN--

...AND WHAT BETTER TARGET THAN THAT CRINGING COWARD, **LEXOR?**

PERHAPS IT IS THE RUSTLE OF LEAVES THAT ALERTS THE DARKLING LORD--

--PERHAPS SOME OLDER, INSTINCTIVE SENSE OF SELF-PRESERVATION--

BYE

--BUT WHATEVER THE REASON, ECTAR'S ATTACK ISN'T QUITE AS UNEXPECTED AS HE'D HOPED.

FOOL! YOU CAN'T HURT ME!

"THE ARROWS TURN, THE SWORDS **REBEL**--

"--MAY NOTHING PIERCE THIS MORTAL SHELL!"

SKRAK!

OWWW!

HAHAHAHA!

THERE'S THE ONE
CALLED ARZON,
CINDARR! GET HIM!

DON'T GIVE
ME ORDERS,
CRAVEX!

I'LL SMASH THAT
KNIGHT BECAUSE I
WANT TO, NOT ON
YOUR SAY SO--
HUH?

CHANGING INTO
HIS MAGICAL
TOTEM--AN
EAGLE--
FLYING AWAY!
HOW DARE HE!

AMAZING HOW THIS
SKY CLAY REPAIRS
ITSELF, ALMOST
HEALING LIKE A
THING ALIVE!

NOW I CAN
RETURN TO THE
BATTLE--AND
WIN MY MASTER
DARKSTORM'S
GRATEFUL
APPROVAL!

AHH! LEORIC--
ON THAT ROCK--
ABOUT TO
AMBUSH LORD
DARKSTORM!

HOW BETTER TO
WIN MY LORD'S
GRATITUDE THAN
BY DESTROYING HIS
ENEMY? LEORIC
CAN'T SEE OR HEAR
ME AT THIS
DISTANCE!

I HAVE
YOU IN MY
SIGHTS,
LEORIC!

YOU'RE
MINE!

AND YOU'RE MINE,
BACK-STABBER!

ARRRHH!

ZAMM!

UH...NO...
LASER FIRING
W/ED...ITS
BURST...GOING
TO HIT...

DARKSTORM!
MASTER, LOOK OUT!

VOOM!

THAT INCREDIBLE FOOL MORTDRED -- HE BLASTED DARKSTORM'S CHARIOT RIGHT OUT FROM UNDER HIM!

MORTDRED WILL PAY FOR THIS DAY'S DISASTER, IF DARKSTORM LIVES. AND IF HE DOESN'T... HMMM...

MY LORD?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR MASTER, REEKON...

--WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF!

THE FATE I INTENDED FOR HIM, I NOW GIVE TO YOU!

RAWWR!

NO! UHHH!

--NOT-- UNNG--

IT'S-- UGGH--

--FAIR-- UNNGH!

SKRASH!

WE WERE SO CLOSE TO VICTORY! THE KNIGHTS CHEATED!

IF DARKSTORM IS HARMED-- I MUST GO TO HIM! LET ME BECOME MY MAGICAL TOTEM!

MORTDRED, IF THAT'S YOU-- GET DARKSTORM ONTO HIS CHARIOT! PREPARE TO RETREAT!

WITH DARKSTORM FALLEN, WE HAVE NO DIRECTION-- NO LEADERSHIP! WE'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO FLEE!

AND IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!

MY FAULT?

OH YES, BLAME ME, BLAME FAITHFUL MORTDRED! WHILE YOU SPEAK AGAINST HIM, I'VE BEEN MY LORD DARKSTORM'S ONLY TRUE AND LOYAL SUBJECT!

NATURALLY THIS IS ALL MY FAULT!



SHUT UP, MORTDRED--
BEFORE I TEACH YOU
ANOTHER LESSON
IN MANNERS!

YOU HEARD,
REEKON! ALL OF
YOU! RETREAT!

RETREAT!

BLAME
ME, ALWAYS
BLAME ME,
NEVER GIVE
ME CREDIT,
NOT ONCE--



NEXT MORNING,
IN DARKSTORM'S
DARK DOMAIN...

I MUST GIVE
YOU CREDIT,
MORTDRED...



...IF YOU WERE
WORKING FOR
LEORIC, YOU
COULD NOT
HAVE GIVEN HIM
MORE HELP
THAN YOU
DID LAST
NIGHT.

I WANTED TO SHIFT
THE BALANCE OF
POWER, AND THAT'S
WHAT YOU DID--BUT
BY LOSING THE SKY
CLAW TO THE
KNIGHTS, YOU SHIFTED
IT IN THEIR FAVOR!

B-B-BUT MY
LORD
DARKSTORM...



AND LET'S NOT
EVEN MENTION THE
INJURIES YOUR
BUMBLING CAUSED
ME PERSONALLY.

LOCK HIM AWAY
TILL I DECIDE
WHAT TO DO WITH
HIM! I DON'T WANT
TO SEE HIS
FACE OR HEAR
HIS VOICE FOR
THE NEXT WEEK
AT LEAST!

B-B-BUT...

SILENCE,
WORM!



B-B-BUT...



KLANG!

...I WAS
ONLY TRYING
TO HELP.

IT JUST
ISN'T FAIR.

PERHAPS IT'S HIS IMAGINA-
TION, MORTDRED THINKS,
BUT SOMEHOW HE SEEMS TO
HEAR HARKON THE BUILDER...
LAUGHING.

THE END